

THE OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE

THE HOLY BIBLE

REVISED STANDARD VERSION CONTAINING
THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

*Translated from the original tongues, being the version set forth A.D.1611
revised A.D.1881-1885 and A.D.1901
compared with the most ancient authorities and revised A.D.1952*

WITH

*Introductions, comments, cross references, general articles,
tables of chronology and of measures and weights,
and index*

EDITED BY

HERBERT G. MAY AND BRUCE M. METZGER



NEW YORK · OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1962

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Editors' Preface, vii

Preface to the Revised Standard Version, ix

The Names and Order of the Books of the Bible, xv

Alphabetical List of Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible, xvi

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT, xxi

THE PENTATEUCH, xxiv

THE OLD TESTAMENT, 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, 1167

THE NEW TESTAMENT, 1171

How to Read the Bible with Understanding: the Diversity and
the Unity of the Scriptures, 1513

Survey of the Geography, History, and Archaeology of the Bible Lands, 1517

Measures and Weights in the Bible, 1530

Chronological Tables of Rulers, 1532

English Versions of the Bible: the Tyndale-King James Tradition, 1535

Index to Annotations, 1541

Maps of Bible Lands

Index to Maps

THE NAMES AND ORDER OF
THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Old Testament

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Genesis	1	2 Chronicles	530	Daniel	1067
Exodus	67	Ezra	573	Hosea	1088
Leviticus	122	Nehemiah	586	Joel	1101
Numbers	160	Esther	603	Amos	1107
Deuteronomy	214	Job	613	Obadiah	1118
Joshua	263	Psalms	656	Jonah	1120
Judges	293	Proverbs	769	Micah	1123
Ruth	325	Ecclesiastes	805	Nahum	1132
1 Samuel	330	Song of Solomon	815	Habakkuk	1136
2 Samuel	374	Isaiah	822	Zephaniah	1140
1 Kings	413	Jeremiah	908	Haggai	1145
2 Kings	454	Lamentations	991	Zechariah	1148
1 Chronicles	495	Ezekiel	1000	Malachi	1160

The New Testament

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Matthew	1171	Ephesians	1415	Hebrews	1453
Mark	1213	Philippians	1421	James	1467
Luke	1239	Colossians	1426	1 Peter	1472
John	1284	1 Thessalonians	1431	2 Peter	1478
The Acts	1317	2 Thessalonians	1435	1 John	1482
Romans	1359	1 Timothy	1438	2 John	1487
1 Corinthians	1378	2 Timothy	1444	3 John	1488
2 Corinthians	1396	Titus	1448	Jude	1489
Galatians	1408	Philemon	1451	Revelation	1491

THE EDITORS' PREFACE

THIS ANNOTATED EDITION of the Holy Scriptures is intended to serve both the general reader and the student of the Bible. Besides containing the complete text and notes of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, it supplies the following helps.

1. General introductions to the Old Testament and to the New Testament present information regarding the literary divisions, the language, text, and canon of each Testament.

2. Each of the sixty-six books of the Bible has an introduction dealing with its composition, authorship, date, and contents. Because of common problems of authorship and date, there is also an introduction to the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch).

3. Each chapter of the Bible is supplied with annotations which explain literary, historical, geographical, archaeological, and theological matters in the text. In addition to the comments are selected cross references to other passages of Scripture which shed light upon the verse under consideration. The words in boldface type at the beginning of each section of the annotations serve as an outline of the subject matter of the Biblical text. Running heads at the top of each page indicate at a glance the general content or noteworthy passages.

4. Several special articles provide fuller information on (a) the use and understanding of the Bible; (b) the geography, history, and archaeology of Bible lands (including also tables of chronology and of measures and weights); and (c) the principal English versions of the Scriptures in the Tyndale-King James tradition.

5. An index of the chief annotations directs attention to comments on important names, institutions, and ideas in the Bible.

The following persons contributed to THE OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE:

The Introduction to the Old Testament and the Introduction to the New Testament were written, respectively, by the Old Testament Editor, HERBERT G. MAY, Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, and by the New Testament Editor, BRUCE M. METZGER, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

The introductions and annotations for individual books of the Bible were contributed by BERNHARD W. ANDERSON, The Theological School, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; he also wrote the introduction to the Pentateuch); ROBERT C. DENTAN, General Theological Seminary, New York City (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Psalms);

The Editors' Preface

WILLIAM F. STINESPRING, The Divinity School, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles); ARTHUR JEFFERY, Columbia University, New York City (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel); SAMUEL TERRIEN, Union Theological Seminary, New York City (Job); R. B. Y. SCOTT, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations); VICTOR R. GOLD, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, California (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel); R. LANSING HICKS, Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut (the Twelve Minor Prophets—Hosea through Malachi); ELWYN E. HILDEN, Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania (Matthew, Mark, and Luke); DONALD G. MILLER, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (the Gospel and the three Letters of John); SHERMAN E. JOHNSON, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, California (the Acts of the Apostles); JOHN KNOX, Union Theological Seminary, New York City (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Philippians); WARREN A. QUANBECK, Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude); and BRUCE M. METZGER (Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Hebrews, and Revelation).

The special articles were prepared by H. H. ROWLEY, Professor Emeritus of the University of Manchester, Manchester, England ("How to Read the Bible with Understanding"); GEORGES A. BARROIS, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey ("Survey of the Geography, History, and Archaeology of the Bible Lands"); and LUTHER A. WEIGLE, Dean of the Divinity School and Sterling Professor, Emeritus, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut ("English Versions of the Bible: The Tyndale-King James Tradition").

The editors express their gratitude to all who are mentioned above, as well as to the staff and craftsmen of the Oxford University Press, who, under the guidance of Wilbur D. Ruggles, Manager of the Bible Department, assisted in producing this annotated edition of the Holy Scriptures. May its varied helps prove useful in leading many readers to a deeper understanding of the Word of God.

HERBERT G. MAY
Old Testament Editor

BRUCE M. METZGER
New Testament Editor

PREFACE

THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION of the Bible is an authorized revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which was a revision of the King James Version, published in 1611.

The first English version of the Scriptures made by direct translation from the original Hebrew and Greek, and the first to be printed, was the work of William Tyndale. He met bitter opposition. He was accused of willfully perverting the meaning of the Scriptures, and his New Testaments were ordered to be burned as "untrue translations." He was finally betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and in October 1536, was publicly executed and burned at the stake.

Yet Tyndale's work became the foundation of subsequent English versions, notably those of Coverdale, 1535; Thomas Matthew (probably a pseudonym for John Rogers), 1537; the Great Bible, 1539; the Geneva Bible, 1560; and the Bishops' Bible, 1568. In 1582 a translation of the New Testament, made from the Latin Vulgate by Roman Catholic scholars, was published at Rheims.

The translators who made the King James Version took into account all of these preceding versions; and comparison shows that it owes something to each of them. It kept felicitous phrases and apt expressions, from whatever source, which had stood the test of public usage. It owed most, especially in the New Testament, to Tyndale.

The King James Version had to compete with the Geneva Bible in popular use; but in the end it prevailed, and for more than two and a half centuries no other authorized translation of the Bible into English was made. The King James Version became the "Authorized Version" of the English-speaking peoples.

The King James Version has with good reason been termed "the noblest monument of English prose." Its revisers in 1881 expressed admiration for "its simplicity, its dignity, its power, its happy turns of expression . . . the music of its cadences, and the felicities of its rhythm." It entered, as no other book has, into the making of the personal character and the public institutions of the English-speaking peoples. We owe to it an incalculable debt.

Yet the King James Version has grave defects. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of Biblical studies and the discovery of many manuscripts more ancient than those upon which the King James Version was based, made it manifest that these defects are so many and so serious as to call for revision of the English translation. The task was undertaken, by authority of the Church of England, in 1870. The English Revised Version of the Bible was published in 1881-1885; and the American Standard Version, its variant embodying the preferences of the American scholars associated in the work, was published in 1901.

Because of unhappy experience with unauthorized publications in the two decades between 1881 and 1901, which tampered with the text of the English Revised Version in the supposed interest of the American public, the American Standard Version was copyrighted, to protect the text from unauthorized changes. In 1928 this copyright was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education, and thus passed into the ownership of the churches of the United States and Canada which were associated in this Council through their boards of education and publication.

The Council appointed a committee of scholars to have charge of the text of the American Standard Version and to undertake inquiry as to whether further revision was necessary. For more than two years the Committee worked upon the problem of whether or not revision should be undertaken; and if so, what should be its nature and extent. In the end the decision was reached that there is need for a thorough revision of the version of 1901, which will stay as close to the Tyndale-King James tradition as it can in the light of our present knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek texts and their meaning on the one hand, and our present understanding of English on the other.

In 1937 the revision was authorized by vote of the Council, which directed that the resulting version should "embody the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and express this meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James Version a supreme place in English literature."

Thirty-two scholars have served as members of the Committee charged with making the revision, and they have secured the review and counsel of an Advisory Board of fifty representatives of the cooperating denominations. The Committee has worked in two sections, one dealing with the Old Testament and one with the New Testament. Each section has submitted its work to the scrutiny of the members of the other section; and the charter of the Committee requires that all changes be agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Committee. The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published in 1946. The publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, was authorized by vote of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. in 1951.

The problem of establishing the correct Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Old Testament is very different from the corresponding problem in the New Testament. For the New Testament we have a large number of Greek manuscripts, preserving many variant forms of the text. Some of them were made only two or three centuries later than the original composition of the books. For the Old Testament only late manuscripts survive, all (with the exception of the Dead Sea texts of Isaiah and Habakkuk and some fragments of other books) based on a standardized form of the text established many centuries after the books were written.

The present revision is based on the consonantal Hebrew and Aramaic text as fixed early in the Christian era and revised by Jewish scholars (the "Masoretes") of the sixth to ninth centuries. The vowel signs, which were added by the Masoretes, are accepted also in the main, but where a more probable and convincing reading can be obtained by assuming different vowels, this has been done. No notes are given in such cases, because the vowel points are less ancient and reliable than the consonants.

Departures from the consonantal text of the best manuscripts have been made only where it seems clear that errors in copying had been made before the text was standardized. Most of the corrections adopted are based on the ancient versions (translations into Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and Latin), which were made before the time of the Masoretic revision and therefore reflect earlier forms of the text. In every such instance a footnote specifies the version or versions from which the correction has been derived, and also gives a translation of the Masoretic Text.

Sometimes it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission, but none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text. Such corrections are indicated in the footnotes by the abbreviation *Cn*, and a translation of the Masoretic Text is added.

The discovery of the meaning of the text, once the best readings have been established, is aided by many new resources for understanding the original languages. Much progress has been made in the historical and comparative study of these languages. A vast quantity of writings in related Semitic languages, some of them only recently discovered, has greatly enlarged our knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. Sometimes the present translation will be found to render a Hebrew word in a sense quite different from that of the traditional interpretation. It has not been felt necessary in such cases to attach a footnote, because no change in the text is involved and it may be assumed that the new rendering was not adopted without convincing evidence. The analysis of religious texts from the ancient Near East has made clearer the significance of ideas and practices recorded in the Old Testament. Many difficulties and obscurities, of course, remain. Where the choice between two meanings is particularly difficult or doubtful, we have given an alternative rendering in a footnote. If in the judgment of the Committee the meaning of a passage is quite uncertain or obscure, either because of corruption in the text or because of the inadequacy of our present knowledge of the language, that fact is indicated by a note. It should not be assumed, however, that the Committee was entirely sure or unanimous concerning every rendering not so indicated. To record all minority views was obviously out of the question.

A major departure from the practice of the American Standard Version is the rendering of the Divine Name, the "Tetragrammaton." The American Standard Version used the term "Jehovah"; the King James Version had employed this in four places, but everywhere else, except in three cases where it

was employed as part of a proper name, used the English word LORD (or in certain cases GOD) printed in capitals. The present revision returns to the procedure of the King James Version, which follows the precedent of the ancient Greek and Latin translators and the long established practice in the reading of the Hebrew scriptures in the synagogue. While it is almost if not quite certain that the Name was originally pronounced "Yahweh," this pronunciation was not indicated when the Masoretes added vowel signs to the consonantal Hebrew text. To the four consonants YHWH of the Name, which had come to be regarded as too sacred to be pronounced, they attached vowel signs indicating that in its place should be read the Hebrew word *Adonai* meaning "Lord" (or *Elohim* meaning "God"). The ancient Greek translators substituted the word *Kyrios* (Lord) for the Name. The Vulgate likewise used the Latin word *Dominus*. The form "Jehovah" is of late medieval origin; it is a combination of the consonants of the Divine Name and the vowels attached to it by the Masoretes but belonging to an entirely different word. The sound of Y is represented by J and the sound of W by V, as in Latin. For two reasons the Committee has returned to the more familiar usage of the King James Version: (1) the word "Jehovah" does not accurately represent any form of the Name ever used in Hebrew; and (2) the use of any proper name for the one and only God, as though there were other gods from whom He had to be distinguished, was discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is entirely inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church.

The King James Version of the New Testament was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying. It was essentially the Greek text of the New Testament as edited by Beza, 1589, who closely followed that published by Erasmus, 1516–1535, which was based upon a few medieval manuscripts. The earliest and best of the eight manuscripts which Erasmus consulted was from the tenth century, and he made the least use of it because it differed most from the commonly received text; Beza had access to two manuscripts of great value, dating from the fifth and sixth centuries, but he made very little use of them because they differed from the text published by Erasmus.

We now possess many more ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, and are far better equipped to seek to recover the original wording of the Greek text. The evidence for the text of the books of the New Testament is better than for any other ancient book, both in the number of extant manuscripts and in the nearness of the date of some of these manuscripts to the date when the book was originally written.

The revisers in the 1870's had most of the evidence that we now have for the Greek text, though the most ancient of all extant manuscripts of the Greek New Testament were not discovered until 1931. But they lacked the resources which discoveries within the past eighty years have afforded for understanding the vocabulary, grammar and idioms of the Greek New Testament. An amazing

body of Greek papyri has been unearthed in Egypt since the 1870's—private letters, official reports, wills, business accounts, petitions, and other such trivial, everyday recordings of the activities of human beings. In 1895 appeared the first of Adolf Deissmann's studies of these ordinary materials. He proved that many words which had hitherto been assumed to belong to what was called "Biblical Greek" were current in the spoken vernacular of the first century A.D. The New Testament was written in the Koiné, the common Greek which was spoken and understood practically everywhere throughout the Roman Empire in the early centuries of the Christian era. This development in the study of New Testament Greek has come since the work on the English Revised Version and the American Standard Version was done, and at many points sheds new light upon the meaning of the Greek text.

A major reason for revision of the King James Version, which is valid for both the Old Testament and the New Testament, is the change since 1611 in English usage. Many forms of expression have become archaic, while still generally intelligible—the use of *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, *thine* and the verb endings *-est* and *-edst*, the verb endings *-eth* and *-th*, it came to pass that, whosoever, whatsoever, insomuch that, because that, for that, unto, howbeit, peradventure, holden, aforetime, must needs, would fain, behooved, to you-ward, etc. Other words are obsolete and no longer understood by the common reader. The greatest problem, however, is presented by the English words which are still in constant use but now convey a different meaning from that which they had in 1611 and in the King James Version. These words were once accurate translations of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures; but now, having changed in meaning, they have become misleading. They no longer say what the King James translators meant them to say.

The King James Version uses the word "let" in the sense of "hinder," "prevent" to mean "precede," "allow" in the sense of "approve," "communicate" for "share," "conversation" for "conduct," "comprehend" for "overcome," "ghost" for "spirit," "wealth" for "well-being," "allege" for "prove," "demand" for "ask," "take no thought" for "be not anxious," "purchase a good degree" for "gain a good standing," etc. The Greek word for "immediately" is translated in the King James Version not only by "immediately" and "straightway" but also by the terms "anon," "by and by," and "presently." There are more than three hundred such English words which are used in the King James Version in a sense substantially different from that which they now convey. It not only does the King James translators no honor, but it is quite unfair to them and to the truth which they understood and expressed, to retain these words which now convey meanings they did not intend.

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, was published on September 30, 1952, and has met with wide acceptance. This preface does not undertake to set forth in detail the lines along

which the revision proceeded. That is done in pamphlets entitled *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* and *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*, written by members of the Committee and designed to help the general public to understand the main principles which have guided this comprehensive revision of the King James and American Standard versions.

These principles were reaffirmed by the Committee in 1959, in connection with a study of criticisms and suggestions from various readers. As a result, a few changes have been authorized for the present and subsequent editions. Most of these are corrections of punctuation, capitalization, or footnotes. Some changes of words or phrases are made in the interest of consistency, clarity or accuracy of translation. Examples of such changes are "from," Job 19.26; "bread," Matthew 7.9, 1 Corinthians 10.17; "is he," Matthew 21.9 and parallels; "the Son," Matthew 27.54, Mark 15.39; "ask nothing of me," John 16.23; "for this life only," 1 Corinthians 15.19; "the husband of one wife," 1 Timothy 3.2,12; 5.9; Titus 1.6.

All the reasons which led to the demand for revision of the King James Version in the nineteenth century are still valid, and are even more cogent now than then. We have had a freer charter than our predecessors in the 1870's in that we have not been required, as they were, to limit the language of the English Bible to the vocabulary of the Elizabethan age. But we hope that we have not taken undue advantage of that freedom. The Revised Standard Version is not a new translation in the language of today. It is not a paraphrase which aims at striking idioms. It is a revision which seeks to preserve all that is best in the English Bible as it has been known and used through the years. It is intended for use in public and private worship, not merely for reading and instruction. We have resisted the temptation to use phrases that are merely current usage, and have sought to put the message of the Bible in simple, enduring words that are worthy to stand in the great Tyndale-King James tradition. We are glad to say, with the King James translators: "Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better."

The Bible is more than a historical document to be preserved. And it is more than a classic of English literature to be cherished and admired. It is a record of God's dealing with men, of God's revelation of Himself and His will. It records the life and work of Him in whom the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among men. The Bible carries its full message, not to those who regard it simply as a heritage of the past or praise its literary style, but to those who read it that they may discern and understand God's Word to men. That Word must not be disguised in phrases that are no longer clear, or hidden under words that have changed or lost their meaning. It must stand forth in language that is direct and plain and meaningful to people today. It is our hope and our earnest prayer that this Revised Standard Version of the Bible may be used by God to speak to men in these momentous times, and to help them to understand and believe and obey His Word.

THE NAMES AND ORDER OF
THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Old Testament

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Genesis	1	2 Chronicles	530	Daniel	1067
Exodus	67	Ezra	573	Hosea	1088
Leviticus	122	Nehemiah	586	Joel	1101
Numbers	160	Esther	603	Amos	1107
Deuteronomy	214	Job	613	Obadiah	1118
Joshua	263	Psalms	656	Jonah	1120
Judges	293	Proverbs	769	Micah	1123
Ruth	325	Ecclesiastes	805	Nahum	1132
1 Samuel	330	Song of Solomon	815	Habakkuk	1136
2 Samuel	374	Isaiah	822	Zephaniah	1140
1 Kings	413	Jeremiah	908	Haggai	1145
2 Kings	454	Lamentations	991	Zechariah	1148
1 Chronicles	495	Ezekiel	1000	Malachi	1160

The New Testament

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Matthew	1171	Ephesians	1415	Hebrews	1453
Mark	1213	Philippians	1421	James	1467
Luke	1239	Colossians	1426	1 Peter	1472
John	1284	1 Thessalonians	1431	2 Peter	1478
The Acts	1317	2 Thessalonians	1435	1 John	1482
Romans	1359	1 Timothy	1438	2 John	1487
1 Corinthians	1378	2 Timothy	1444	3 John	1488
2 Corinthians	1396	Titus	1448	Jude	1489
Galatians	1408	Philemon	1451	Revelation	1491

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF

ABBREVIATIONS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

		PAGE			PAGE
Acts	The Acts	1317	Jude	Jude	1489
Am.	Amos	1107	1 Kg.	1 Kings	413
1 Chr.	1 Chronicles	495	2 Kg.	2 Kings	454
2 Chr.	2 Chronicles	530	Lam.	Lamentations	991
Col.	Colossians	1426	Lev.	Leviticus	122
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	1378	Lk.	Luke	1239
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	1396	Mal.	Malachi	1160
Dan.	Daniel	1067	Mic.	Micah	1123
Dt.	Deuteronomy	214	Mk.	Mark	1213
Ec.	Ecclesiastes	805	Mt.	Matthew	1171
Eph.	Ephesians	1415	Nah.	Nahum	1132
Est.	Esther	603	Neh.	Nehemiah	586
Ex.	Exodus	67	Num.	Numbers	160
Ezek.	Ezekiel	1000	Ob.	Obadiah	1118
Ezra	Ezra	573	1 Pet.	1 Peter	1472
Gal.	Galatians	1408	2 Pet.	2 Peter	1478
Gen.	Genesis	1	Phil.	Philippians	1421
Hab.	Habakkuk	1136	Philem.	Philemon	1451
Hag.	Haggai	1145	Pr.	Proverbs	769
Heb.	Hebrews	1453	Ps.	Psalms	656
Hos.	Hosea	1088	Rev.	Revelation	1491
Is.	Isaiah	822	Rom.	Romans	1359
Jas.	James	1467	Ru.	Ruth	325
Jer.	Jeremiah	908	1 Sam.	1 Samuel	330
Jg.	Judges	293	2 Sam.	2 Samuel	374
Jl.	Joel	1101	S. of S.	Song of Solomon	815
Jn.	John	1284	1 Th.	1 Thessalonians	1431
1 Jn.	1 John	1482	2 Th.	2 Thessalonians	1435
2 Jn.	2 John	1487	1 Tim.	1 Timothy	1438
3 Jn.	3 John	1488	2 Tim.	2 Timothy	1444
Job	Job	613	Tit.	Titus	1448
Jon.	Jonah	1120	Zech.	Zechariah	1148
Jos.	Joshua	263	Zeph.	Zephaniah	1140

MISCELLANEOUS ABBREVIATIONS

Other abbreviations used in the annotations throughout the Bible and in the notes to the books of the Old Testament are the following:

<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
Aram	Aramaic
<i>B.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War (Bellum Judaicum)</i>
Ch., chs.	Chapter, chapters
Cn	Correction; made where the text has suffered in transmission and the versions provide no satisfactory restoration but where the Standard Bible Committee agrees with the judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text. The reader is referred to pp. x–xi for a statement of policy concerning text and notes.
e.g.	for example
Gk	Septuagint, Greek version of the Old Testament
Heb	Hebrew of the consonantal Masoretic Text of the Old Testament
i.e.	that is
Josephus	Flavius Josephus (Jewish historian, about A.D. 37 to about 95)
lit.	literally
Macc.	The book(s) of the Maccabees
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
MT	The Hebrew of the pointed Masoretic Text of the Old Testament
n.	note
Sam	Samaritan Hebrew text of the Old Testament
Syr	Syriac Version of the Old Testament
Tg	Targum
Vg	Vulgate, Latin Version of the Old Testament
v., vv.	Verse, verses

OTHER EXPLANATIONS

In the Old Testament the word LORD (printed in capital letters) represents the Divine name, Yahweh (for further information see pp. xi–xii).

In the annotations italics are used to designate the words which are quoted verbatim from the Scripture text. In the notes belonging to the Revised Standard Version (designated by italic letters and standing at the foot of the second column of the Scripture text) alternative renderings or readings are printed in italics.

In the annotations on the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) the cross references to parallel passages stand in parentheses immediately after the boldface heading of a new paragraph. For example, at the account of Jesus' transfiguration in Mk.9.2–8 the references to Mt.17.1–8 and Lk.9.28–36 indicate where the Synoptic

Abbreviations

parallels are to be found; similar information is given at the passages in Matthew and Luke. A careful comparison of such parallel passages will often reveal the special emphases in each Synoptic account.

HOW TO LOOK UP REFERENCES

Jn.3.16	means the Gospel according to John, chapter 3, verse 16.
Is.9.1,6	means Isaiah, chapter 9, verse 1 and verse 6.
Rev.22.1-5	means Revelation, chapter 22, verses 1 to 5 inclusive.
Acts 8.4; 11.19	means Acts, chapter 8, verse 4; and chapter 11, verse 19 (of the same book).
See Heb.3.2 n.	means there is an annotation on Hebrews, chapter 3, verse 2. Both the Scripture passage and the annotation should be consulted.
v. 4a; v. 7b	means the first part of verse 4; the second part of verse 7.

The best commentary on the Bible is often some other text in the Bible: therefore it cannot be too strongly urged that, for the fullest comprehension of any one passage, all of the cross references should be looked up.

**THE
OLD TESTAMENT**

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE OLD TESTAMENT may be described as the literary expression of the religious life of ancient Israel. More than a thousand years of time separate the earliest and the latest compositions in the Old Testament. It reflects a varied social, economic, political, religious, and geographical background; slave and free, the nomad and farmer, the oppressed poor and privileged landowners and rulers, proud empires and vassal states, the desert and the sown, rain-watered highlands and the great flood plains of the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates—these are among the settings of the drama of divine revelation. The Old Testament reflects the many facets of the life of Israel, and its literature takes many forms; in it are prose and poetry, myth and legend, folk tale and history, sacred hymns and a superb love song, religious and secular laws, proverbs of the wise and oracles of the prophets, epic poems, laments, parables, and allegories. Despite the variety in content as well as in viewpoint, there is a significant unity, centered in belief in the God of judgment and redemption, of justice and mercy, and springing out of the continuity and corporate nature of that people chosen by God to play the main role in the drama of revelation and from whom was to come Jesus of Nazareth. The Israelites were more history-conscious than any other people in the ancient world. Probably as early as the time of David and Solomon, out of a matrix of myth, legend, and history, there had appeared the earliest written form of the story of the saving acts of God from Creation to the conquest of the Promised Land, an account which later in modified form became a part of Scripture. But it was to be a long time before the idea of Scripture arose and the Old Testament took its present form.

The Jews reckoned three divisions within the Scriptures: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law is the Pentateuch, the first five books, i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Prophets consist of the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets. The books of the Former Prophets are Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (1 and 2 Samuel are reckoned as one book, and so also 1 and 2 Kings). The Latter Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (the "Major Prophets") and the book of the Twelve (the "Minor Prophets"—Hosea to Malachi). The remaining books belong to the Writings. In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth, Lamentations, and Daniel are placed among the Writings, a section which begins with the Psalms and ends with 1 and 2 Chronicles; this is in contrast with the English Bible, where the order is influenced by the Greek and Latin versions. Some have seen an allusion to this three-fold division in "the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms" of Luke 24.44.

That the Bible was not written originally in English is a fact not always appreciated, and there are even those who are unaware of it. What we use is the translated Bible (see pp. 1535-1539). The New Testament was written in

Greek and the Old Testament in Hebrew, with the exception of parts of Daniel (2.4b–7.28) and Ezra (4.8–6.18; 7.12–26) and one verse in Jeremiah (10.11), which are in Aramaic. The translation of Hebrew and Aramaic presents distinctive and often difficult problems; they belong to the Semitic family of languages, to which Arabic, Assyrian and Babylonian, and Canaanite also belong, in contrast to Greek and English, which are Indo-European.

The text of the Old Testament, like that of the New Testament (see p. 1169), has occasionally suffered from copyists' errors and scribal emendations, some of which can be corrected in the light of the ancient versions; the notes of the RSV give many examples of this. The translator must also decide among variant readings in the Hebrew manuscripts themselves, a task complicated by the recent discovery of much earlier manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament than had previously been known. Before the time of the council of Jamnia, about A.D. 90–100, there did not exist a single standard text of the various books of Scripture regarded as possessing sole authority (a *textus receptus*). Rather, as the Dead Sea (Qumran) Scrolls afford evidence, there were variant recensions of the same Old Testament book. It is true that there was already in existence a form of that Hebrew text which was to be edited later by the Jewish scholars known as Masoretes (from about A.D. 600 to the 10th century) and their predecessors and which is the standard text used today, but there were also variant forms of the text. In contrast with this Qumran evidence of variant textual recensions, the Biblical manuscripts found further south in the Wilderness of Judea at Wadi Murabbaat and belonging to the early part of the second century A.D. (after A.D. 100) are strictly Masoretic (proto-Masoretic) in character, disclosing that by this time the standard text had been adopted. Although there are variants in the preserved manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, due largely to simple scribal errors, the Masoretic Text has been transmitted with incredible accuracy.

The books accepted as authoritative Scripture are spoken of as belonging to the "canon" (see p. 1169f.) of Scripture. If by canonical one means that a book must be regarded as having a special authority, that it is holy and inspired, that it is one of a strictly limited number of books, and that there is a single, standard text with its verbal form inviolable, then one cannot speak of a canon of Old Testament Scripture before about A.D. 100. Long before this, however, the Jews had their Scriptures.

The process by which the Jews became "the people of the Book" was gradual, and the development is shrouded in the mists of history and tradition. One might designate as their earliest Scripture "the book of the law" found in the Jerusalem temple in 621 B.C. and used as the basis for Josiah's reform. It is generally agreed that it is now incorporated within the present book of Deuteronomy (chs. 5[12?]-26; 28). Another landmark is "the book of the law of Moses" brought by Ezra from Babylonia in 458 (398 ?) B.C. (Ezra 7.6-10,14; Neh. chs. 8-10). This has been variously identified by scholars as the prototype or earlier form of that legislation which became the P Code in the Pentateuch,

or the P Code itself, or the completed Pentateuch (see the Introduction to the Pentateuch). The date of the final compilation of the Pentateuch or Law, which was the first corpus or larger body of literature that came to be regarded by the Jews as authoritative Scripture, is uncertain, although some have conservatively dated it at the time of the Exile in the sixth century. Since the P Source is found in Genesis through Joshua, those responsible for the final form of the Pentateuch must have looked upon Joshua as a continuation of it, but because the career of Moses did not extend beyond Deuteronomy, only Genesis to Deuteronomy came to be regarded as Mosaic in origin, and so the Law was limited to the Pentateuch. Certainly before the middle of the third century B.C., when according to tradition the Pentateuch was first translated into Greek, it had achieved a primary status as the Scripture of the Jews. It was to retain this primary position even after the body of Scripture had been enlarged to include the Prophets and the Writings. When in the second century B.C. the Samaritans finally separated from Judaism, they retained the Pentateuch as their sole Scripture, preserving it in a script derived from the old Hebrew script which was revived in the Maccabean period.

Before the adoption of the Pentateuch as the Law of Moses, there had been compiled and edited in the spirit and diction of the Deuteronomic "school" the group of books consisting of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, in much their present form. This may have occurred in two stages, i.e. shortly before the death of Josiah in 609 B.C. and during the Exile in the middle of the sixth century. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the book of the Twelve were edited and compiled during the post-exilic period. The process of compiling and editing the Latter Prophets is illustrated by the addition of chs. 40–66 to the book of Isaiah and chs. 9–14 to the prophecies of Zechariah, by the superscriptions giving information about the person and time of the prophet, and by certain additions and changes mentioned in the annotations in this volume. The editing was both an adaptation of the books of the prophets to the needs of the post-exilic period and a recognition of the relevance of the prophetic messages for contemporary as well as historic Israel. Just when the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets came to be regarded as a definitely limited body of Scripture is not clear. Ben Sirach, the author of the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, writing around 180 B.C., seems to have regarded his work as a continuation of the Prophets and the books of Wisdom. The grandson of Ben Sirach (in his Preface to Ecclesiasticus) refers to the three-fold division of Scripture as the Law, the Prophets, and the other or rest of the books, although he does not necessarily imply a closed canon. The Former Prophets perhaps came to be associated with the Latter Prophets because of allusions in the Former Prophets to prophetic figures and because of a tradition that they were composed largely by prophets. Such a tradition is suggested in 1 Chr.29.29; 2 Chr.9.29; 12.15; 13.22; 20.34; 26.22; 32.32.

In contrast with the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets, and the Latter Prophets, the books of the Writings contain less homogeneous materials. They were not edited in groups or combined as in the case of the other books, but circulated

separately. This should be qualified by the recognition that 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are a connected history and the work of a single author ("the Chronicler"). It was not until about A.D. 100 that the authority of disputed books among the Writings was settled.

Among many writings not included in the canon were the books of the Apocrypha, which are found in the Septuagint (see p. 1527), and which, with the exception of 1 and 2 Esdras, were composed in the last two centuries B.C., certainly before the council of Jamnia (about A.D. 100). They could not be accepted, in part because of the current conviction that the Old Testament canon was closed at the time of Ezra when prophetic revelation was supposed to have ceased, or because, in the case of some, they had been written in Greek or else had ceased to be copied in Hebrew and Aramaic after their translation into Greek. There was also probably no widespread demand for their canonization.

THE PENTATEUCH

THE PENTATEUCH (literally, the "five scrolls") comprises the so-called "five books of Moses," known in Jewish tradition as the Law or Torah. These books elaborate basic themes of Israel's tradition: the revelation to the patriarchs against the background of primeval history (Genesis), the exodus from Egypt (Exodus chs. 1-18); the giving of the law in connection with the Sinai covenant (Exodus chs. 19-40; Leviticus); and the Lord's guidance of his people through the wilderness toward the promised land (Numbers). The last book, Deuteronomy, which gives Moses' final address to Israel, represents a pause in the flow of the narratives toward the realization of the promise (Joshua).

The Pentateuch embraces a great diversity of material which reflects Israel's pilgrimage from the time of Abraham to the Exile. The whole tradition, however, has been shaped by basic themes found essentially in the confession of faith preserved in Dt.26.5-10 (compare Jos. ch. 24). The Pentateuch may be regarded as an elaboration of this creedal statement, according to the interests and insights of various circles of tradition. In the early monarchy (perhaps about 950 B.C.) a traditionist from Judah (J) first organized the traditions into a written epic. Sometime later (between about 900 to 750 B.C.) a traditionist from North Israel or Ephraim (E) presented another version of the sacred story. In the seventh century B.C. Deuteronomy (D) was published (2 Kg. chs. 22-23), although this version rests upon old traditions. And finally, about the time of the Exile, priestly writers (P) rounded out the expanded tradition with materials preserved by the Jerusalem priesthood.

Thus the Pentateuch took shape over a long period of time. It preserves not only the tones which reverberated in the Mosaic period, but the overtones of meaning perceived by subsequent generations. In tribute to the creative influence of Moses, the whole tradition in its manifold richness was ascribed to the leader to whom, Israel believed, God had spoken as to no other man.

GENESIS

Genesis, meaning "beginning," covers the times from the creation (i.e. the beginning of history) to the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. The book falls naturally into two main sections: chs. 1-11 deal with primeval history; chs. 12-50 treat the history of the "fathers" of Israel. The latter section tells the stories of Abraham (chs. 12-25), of Isaac and his twin sons Esau and Jacob (chs. 26-36), and of Jacob's family, the chief member of which was Joseph (chs. 37-50).

Unlike the stories of primeval history, those of the patriarchs can be read against the background of the history of the Near East in the early part of the second millennium B.C. (2000-1500), as documented from extra-Biblical sources (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 6). The primary purpose of the whole book, however, is to narrate God's dealings with men and, in particular, to interpret Israel's special role in his historical plan. Thus the call of Abraham (12.1-3) is the great turning point. God's creation had been marred by man's persistent wickedness which not even the flood erased. Out of this fallible human material, however, God gradually separated one family line and eventually chose one man, Abraham, promising that he and his people would have a great historical destiny and would be instrumental in bringing divine blessing upon all the dispersed families of mankind.

The book is composed of three main literary traditions (Judean, Ephraimite, and Priestly; see Introduction to Pentateuch) and these, in turn, often preserve ancient oral tradition. Thus the voices of many generations unite in the affirmation that the only true God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose redemptive purpose, like the rainbow of his promise, spans the course of human history from its remote beginning to its unrealized future.

IN THE BEGINNING God CREATED^a the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit^b of God was moving over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be a

firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God

a Or When God began to create b Or wind

1.1-2.4a: The first story of creation. Out of primordial chaos God created an orderly world and assigned a pre-eminent place to man among his creatures. **1:** Probably a preface to the whole account (but see note *a*). **2:** According to ancient belief the world originated from and was suspended upon a watery chaos (*the deep*; compare Ps.24.1), personified as a dragon in the Babylonian creation epic (Is.51.9). **3-5:** Creation by the word of God (Ps.33.6-9) indicates God's unchallenged lordship and prepares for the later doctrine of creation out of nothing (2 Macc. 7.28). Light was created first (compare 2 Cor.4.6), even before the sun. *Night*, a remnant of uncreated darkness (v. 2), was separated from the created light. Since the Jewish day began with sundown, the order is *evening* and *morning*. **6-8:** A *firmament*, regarded as a solid dome (Job 37.18), separated the upper from the lower waters (Ex.20.4; Ps.148.4). See 7.11 n. **9-10:** The

called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens."

²¹ So God created the great sea mon-

sters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I

seas, a portion of the watery chaos, were assigned boundaries at the edge of the earth (Ps.139.9; Pr.8.29), where they continue to menace God's creation (Jer.5.22; Ps.104.7-9). **11-13:** *Vegetation* was created only indirectly by God; his creative command was directed to *the earth*. **14-19:** The sun, moon, and stars are not divine powers that control man's destiny, as was believed in antiquity, but are only *lights*. Implicitly worship of the heavenly host is forbidden (Dt.4.19; Zeph.1.5). **20-23:** The creation of birds and fishes. *Sea monsters*, see Ps.74.13; Job 7.12. **24-25:** God's command for the earth to *bring forth* (compare v. 11) suggests that the animals are immediately bound to *the ground* and only indirectly related to God, in contrast with man. **26-27:** The solemn divine decision emphasizes man's supreme place at the climax of God's creative work. **26:** The plural *us, our* (3.22; 11.7) probably refers to the divine beings who surround God in his heavenly court (1 Kg.22.19; Job 1.6; Is.6.8; compare Ps.29.1) and in whose *image* man was made. **27:** *Him . . . them*; man was not created to be alone but is *male and female* (2.18-24). The Hebrew word for man (Adam) is collective, referring not to an individual but men as a whole. **28:** Man's honor is his task: to exercise *dominion* over the earth as God's representative (Ps. 8). **29-30:** The vegetarian requirement, modified in Noah's time (9.2-3), suggests the paradisiac peace of the

have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.

³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; ⁶ but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into

his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which flows around the whole land of Hav'ilah, where there is gold; ¹² and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone;

c Or flood

primeval age (compare Hos.2.18; Is.11.6–8). **31:** God's works are *very good* (vv. 4,10,12, etc.) for they correspond perfectly to his intention. **2.1–3:** The verb *rested* is the basis of the noun sabbath. The creation-sabbath is the sign of the "rest" which God ordained for his people (Ex.31.12–17).

2.4b–3.24: The creation and the fall of man. This is a different tradition from that in 1.1–2.4a, as evidenced by the flowing style and the different order of events, e.g. man is created before vegetation, animals, and woman. **6:** *A mist* (or *flood*) probably refers to the water which surged up from the subterranean ocean, the source of fertility (49.25). **7:** The word-play on *man* ('adham) and *ground* ('adhamah) introduces a motif characteristic of this early tradition: man's relation to the ground from which he was *formed*, like a potter molds clay (Jer.18.4). Man is not body and soul (a Greek distinction) but is dust animated by the LORD God's *breath* or "spirit" which constitutes him a *living being* or psycho-physical self (Ps.104.29–30; Job 34.14–15). **8–9:** *Eden*, meaning "delight," is a "garden of God" (Is.51.3; Ezek.31.8–9; Jl.2.3) or divine park. **9:** The *tree of life* was believed to confer eternal life (3.22; see Pr.3.18 n.; Rev.22.2,14,19), as the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* confers wisdom (see 2 Sam.14.17; Is.7.15). **10–14:** The rivers, springing from the subterranean ocean (v. 6), flowed out to the four corners of the known

I will make him a helper fit for him.”¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him.²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh;²² and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.²³ Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,^d
because she was taken out of
Man.”^e

²⁴ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

3 Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree

which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”¹² The man said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.”¹⁴ The LORD

d Heb *ishshah* *e* Heb *ish*

historical world. **15-17:** Man is given a task: to *till* and *keep* the garden. The prohibition against eating the forbidden fruit (3.3) stresses God's lordship and man's obedience. **18:** *To be alone* is not good, for man is social by nature (see 1.27 n.). *A helper fit for him* means a partner who is suitable for him, who completes his being. **19:** Naming the animals signifies man's dominion over them (compare 1.28). **21-23:** The deep affinity between man and woman is portrayed in the statement that God made the woman from the man's *rib*. **24-25:** Sex is not regarded as evil but as a God-given impulse which draws man and woman together so that *they become one flesh*. **25:** The two were unashamedly *naked*, a symbol of their guiltless relation to God and to one another. **3.1-7:** The temptation begins with the insinuation of doubt (vv. 1-3), increases as suspicion is cast upon God's motive (vv. 4-5), and becomes irresistible when the couple sense the possibilities of freedom (v. 6). **1:** *The serpent* is merely one of the wild creatures, distinguished from the others by his uncanny wisdom (Mt.10.16). **5:** *Like God* should perhaps be “like gods” (Septuagint), that is, like the divine beings of the heavenly court (v. 22; see 1.26 n.). *On knowing good and evil*, see 2.9 n. **7:** Bodily shame (2.25) symbolizes inner anxiety about a broken relationship with God. **8-13:** Such anxiety leads to a guilty attempt to hide from God (Ps.139.7-12), who is described anthropomorphically as strolling in his garden. **14-15:** The curse contains an

God said to the serpent,
 "Because you have done this,
 cursed are you above all cattle,
 and above all wild animals;
 upon your belly you shall go,
 and dust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.
¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and
 the woman,
 and between your seed and her
 seed;
 he shall bruise your head,
 and you shall bruise his heel."
¹⁶ To the woman he said,
 "I will greatly multiply your pain in
 childbearing;
 in pain you shall bring forth
 children,
 yet your desire shall be for your
 husband,
 and he shall rule over you."
¹⁷ And to Adam he said,
 "Because you have listened to the
 voice of your wife,
 and have eaten of the tree
 of which I commanded you,
 'You shall not eat of it,'
 cursed is the ground because of you;
 in toil you shall eat of it all the
 days of your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring
 forth to you;
 and you shall eat the plants of the
 field.
¹⁹ In the sweat of your face
 you shall eat bread

till you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
 you are dust,
 and to dust you shall return."

²⁰ The man called his wife's name
 Eve,^f because she was the mother of
 all living. ²¹ And the LORD God made
 for Adam and for his wife garments of
 skins, and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, "Be-
 hold, the man has become like one of
 us, knowing good and evil; and now,
 lest he put forth his hand and take also
 of the tree of life, and eat, and live for
 ever"—²³ therefore the LORD God
 sent him forth from the garden of Eden,
 to till the ground from which he was
 taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man; and
 at the east of the garden of Eden he
 placed the cherubim, and a flaming
 sword which turned every way, to
 guard the way to the tree of life.

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife,
 and she conceived and bore Cain,
 saying, "I have gotten^g a man with the
 help of the LORD." ² And again, she
 bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was
 a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of
 the ground. ³ In the course of time
 Cain brought to the LORD an offering
 of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel
 brought of the firstlings of his flock and
 of their fat portions. And the LORD
 had regard for Abel and his offering,

^f The name in Hebrew resembles the word for *living*
^g Heb *qanah*, get

old explanation of why the serpent crawls rather than walks and why men are instinctively hostile to it. **16:** This divine judgment contains an old explanation of woman's pain in child-birth, her sexual *desire* for her husband (i.e. her motherly impulse, compare 30.1), and her subordinate position to man in ancient society. **17–19:** An explanation of man's struggle to eke an existence from the soil. Work is not essentially evil (2.15) but it becomes *toil* as a result of man's broken relationship with his Creator. **17:** The Hebrew word *Adam* is usually translated "man" in this story (see 1.27 n.). Note that the curse is upon the ground, not man. **19:** *Till you return to the ground:* The mortal nature of man was implicit in the circumstances of his origin (2.7); because of man's disobedience, God now makes death an inevitable fate that haunts man throughout life. **21:** *Garments of skins*, a sign of God's protective care even in the time of judgment (4.15). **22:** *Like one of us*, see 3.5 n. *The tree of life* (2.9) does not figure in the temptation story, which explicitly speaks of only one tree in the center of the garden (3.3–6, 11–12, 17). **24:** *The cherubim*, guardians of sacred areas (1 Kg.8.6–7), were represented as winged creatures like the Sphynx of Egypt, half human and half lion (Ezek.41.18–19). *A flaming sword* (compare Jer.47.6) was placed near the cherubim to remind banished man of the impossibility of overstepping his creaturely bounds (compare Ezek.28.13–16).

4.1–26: Cain, Abel, and Seth. 2–5: The story reflects the tension between farmers and semi-nomads, two different ways of life that are symbolized in the two types of offerings. No reason

⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. ⁶ The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

⁸ Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field."^h And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰ And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."ⁱ ¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴ Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, "Not so!ⁱ If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the

presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod,^j east of Eden.

¹⁷ Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. ¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad was the father of Me-hu'ja-el, and Me-hu'ja-el the father of Me-thu'sha-el, and Me-thu'sha-el the father of Lamech. ¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle. ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²² Zillah bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Na'amah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech, hearken to
what I say:

I have slain a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.

²⁴ If Cain is avenged sevenfold,
truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him." ²⁶ To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of the LORD.

^h Sam Gk Syr Compare Vg: Heb lacks *Let us go out to the field*

ⁱ Gk Syr Vg: Heb *Therefore* ^j That is *Wandering*

is given for the acceptance of Abel's offering (compare Ex.33.19). **7:** Perhaps the meaning is that Cain himself will be *accepted*, even though his offering is not, if his deed springs from the right motive. Sin is pictured as a predatory animal, *couching at the door*. **10-11:** Blood is sacred to God, for it is the seat of life (Dt.12.23) and cries *from the ground* for vindication. **13-14:** Cain concludes that exile from the farmland is also exile from the LORD's *face*, i.e. protective presence, exposing him to blood revenge. **15:** The "mark of Cain" was a protective mark, perhaps a tattoo, signifying divine mercy. **17:** Here Cain is not the ancestor of nomadic tribesmen (vv. 11-16) but the founder of sedentary culture. **19-22:** Cultural advance is evidenced by the three occupations of Lamech's sons: shepherds, musicians, and smiths. **23-24:** An ancient song, probably once sung in praise of Lamech, is here quoted to illustrate the development of wickedness from murder to measureless blood revenge. **25-26:** From Cain's genealogy the narrator returns to the sequel of Cain's banishment (vv. 11-16) and introduces the new line of Seth. **26b:** This tradition traces the worship of the LORD (Yahweh) back to the time of Adam's grandson, in contrast to other traditions which claim that the sacred name was introduced in Moses' time (Ex.3.13-15; 6.2-3).

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.

6 When Seth had lived a hundred and five years, he became the father of Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died.

9 When Enosh had lived ninety years, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after the birth of Kenan eight hundred and fifteen years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died.

12 When Kenan had lived seventy years, he became the father of Ma-hal'-alel. ¹³ Kenan lived after the birth of Ma-hal'-alel eight hundred and forty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Thus all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.

15 When Ma-hal'-alel had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶ Ma-hal'-alel lived after the

birth of Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all the days of Ma-hal'-alel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.

18 When Jared had lived a hundred and sixty-two years he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after the birth of Enoch eight hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.

21 When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methu'-selah. ²² Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methu'-selah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

25 When Methu'-selah had lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶ Methu'-selah lived after the birth of Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Thus all the days of Methu'-selah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.

28 When Lamech had lived a hundred and eighty-two years, he became the father of a son, ²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground which the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands." ³⁰ Lamech lived after the birth of Noah five hundred and ninety-five years, and had

5.1-32: The generations from Adam to Noah. This priestly tradition bridges the times from the creation to the flood. **1:** *The book of the generations* was evidently a separate source from which the writer drew genealogical data (6.9; 10.1; 11.10,27; etc.). **1b-2:** See 1.26-28. **3:** The divine likeness (v. 1; see 1.27 n.) was continued in Adam's son Seth, born in his own likeness, and thus was transmitted to succeeding generations without effacement (9.6). Priestly tradition makes no reference to the account of the fall of man. **4-32:** Babylonian tradition also reckons ten heroes before the flood but ascribes fantastically higher ages. In Hebrew tradition the ages decrease from 900-1000 (Adam to Noah), to 200-600 (Noah to Abraham), to 100-200 (the patriarchs), to the normal three-score years and ten (Ps.90.10). This list is somehow related to the genealogy of Cain (4.17-21) as shown by the resemblance of some of the names. **24:** Babylonian tradition also reports that the seventh hero before the flood was taken by God, i.e. translated (2 Kg.2.11). **29:** This verse, the only connection with the early traditions of Eden (3.17-19) and Cain and Abel, anticipates the new age inaugurated with Noah (9.20).

other sons and daughters. ³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died.

32 After Noah was five hundred years old, Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6 When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, "My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh, but his days shall be a hundred and twenty years."

⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof^k for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and set the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh, you

^k Or window

6.1-4: The birth of the Nephilim is related to demonstrate the increase of wickedness on the earth. **1:** This old fragment of mythology connects immediately with chs. 2-4. **2:** *The sons of God* were divine beings who belonged to the heavenly court (1.27 n.). **3:** Despite the lustful intrusion of divine beings into the human sphere, man did not become semi-divine (compare 3.22-24) but remained a mortal creature in whom the LORD's *spirit* dwells temporarily (see 2.7 n.). **4:** Originally the story accounted for *the Nephilim* (Num.13.33; Dt.2.10-11), men of gigantic stature whose superhuman power was thought to result from divine-human marriage.

6.5-8.22: The great flood. God's judgment took the form of a destructive flood, and his mercy was shown in saving a remnant with whom he made a new historical beginning. **5-8:** An introduction, belonging to the old literary tradition found in 2.4b-3.24; 4.1-26; 6.1-4. **5:** The *heart* includes the will and reason, as shown by its capacity for *imagination* of thought. **7:** The Biblical account is superficially similar to the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic. The Biblical perspective, however, is basically different, for the flood was not the expression of polytheistic caprice but of God's judgment upon the *wickedness of man*. **9:** Noah was a *righteous man*, i.e. he stood in right relationship to God (15.6). **11-22:** A parallel version. It is generally recognized that an earlier and a later (priestly) tradition have been combined. **11:** The earth, once seen to be "good" (1.31), is called *corrupt* owing to man's *violence* or wilful, lawless deeds. **14-16:** In the Babylonian epic too, the hero is commanded to build a houseboat, sealing it with pitch. **15:** The dimensions: about 450 × 75 × 45 feet.

shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you, to keep them alive.²¹ Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.”²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation.² Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate; ³ and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive upon the face of all the earth. ⁴ For in seven days I will send rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.”⁵ And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went into the ark, to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹ two and two, male and female, went into the ark

with Noah, as God had commanded Noah.¹⁰ And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.¹² And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.¹³ On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴ they and every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every bird of every sort.¹⁵ They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life.¹⁶ And they that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

17 The flood continued forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.¹⁸ The waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters.¹⁹ And the waters prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered;²⁰ the waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep.²¹ And all flesh died that moved upon

7.1–10: This section is essentially a continuation of the early tradition (6.5–8). 2–3: On clean and unclean animals, see Lev. ch. 11. (The priestly version mentions two animals of every sort [v. 9; 6.19], presuming that the clean-unclean distinction was introduced at Sinai.) 4: The flood was caused by heavy rainfall, lasting *forty days and forty nights* (v. 12; compare the difference in the priestly version, v. 24). 11–24: Largely from the priestly tradition. 11: Here the flood was not caused by a rain storm but was a cosmic catastrophe resulting from opening the *windows of the heavens* (or the firmament) and the upsurging of the *fountains of the great deep* (or the subterranean watery chaos; see 1.6–8 n.). Thus the earth was threatened with a return to pre-creation chaos (1.2). 15: The animals went in *two by two* (6.19; see 7.2 n.). 16b: *The LORD shut him in*, a note from the early tradition, which delights in anthropomorphic touches. 18–20: The waters covered *all the high mountains*, thus threatening a confluence of the upper and lower waters (1.6). Archaeological evidence indicates that traditions of a prehistoric flood covering the whole earth are heightened versions of local inundations, e.g. in the Tigris-

the earth, birds, cattle, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm upon the earth, and every man; ²² everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³ He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. ²⁴ And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

8 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; ² the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³ and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters had abated; ⁴ and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ar'arat. ⁵ And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, ⁷ and sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸ Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹ but the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put forth his hand and took her

and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰ He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; ¹¹ and the dove came back to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹² Then he waited another seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she did not return to him any more.

13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴ In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ "Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷ Bring forth with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth." ¹⁸ So Noah went forth, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. ¹⁹ And every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves upon the earth, went forth by families out of the ark.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ And when the LORD smelled the pleasing odor, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's

Euphrates basin. **8.1-5:** In the main a continuation of the priestly tradition. Because God remembered Noah, he stayed the cosmic destruction by water from above and below (v. 2a). **4:** In the Babylonian epic the boat also rested on a mountain. *Ararat* (2 Kg.19.37; Jer.51.27) is the name of a region in Armenia. **6-12:** Essentially from the early tradition. In the Babylonian epic the hero sent out two birds, a dove and a swallow, each of which came back; the third, a raven, did not return. **13-19:** A continuation of the priestly account. **20-22:** The early tradition relates that Noah sacrificed *burnt offerings* (Lev. ch. 1) of clean animals (see 7.2-3 n.). In the Babylonian epic the hero offered sacrifices and "the gods smelt [compare v. 21] the goodly savor." For the curse, compare 3.17. Despite the evil *imagination of man's heart* (6.5), the LORD's steadfast mercy will be expressed in the regularities of nature, *seedtime and harvest*, etc.

heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.²² While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.² The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered.³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.⁴ Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.⁵ For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man’s brother I will require the life of man.⁶ Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image.⁷ And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it.”

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you,¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall

all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”¹² And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:¹³ I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds,¹⁵ I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.”¹⁷ God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”

18 The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan.¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled.

20 Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard;²¹ and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent.²² And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.²³ Then Shem

1 Gk: Heb repeats *every beast of the earth*

9.1-19: God’s covenant with Noah included all mankind under divine promise and law. **1:** The new age opened with a renewal of the blessing which had been given at creation (v. 7; compare 1.28). **3-6:** The command to exercise dominion (1.29-30) is qualified by the permission to eat animal flesh but not with *its life*, i.e. *its blood* (see 4.10-11 n.). The violence which had corrupted the earth (6.11) is restrained by a very old law against murder, the validity of which is grounded in the creation: man is made in God’s *image* (1.26-27). These verses set forth the laws given to Noah, binding not only on Israel but on all men (Acts 15.20; 21.25). **8-11:** The preservation of the natural order from the waters of chaos is guaranteed by a *covenant* (see 17.2 n.). Unlike later covenants (ch. 17; Ex. ch. 24), this is a universal covenant with Noah, his descendants, and every living creature, for Noah’s three sons (6.10; 9.18-19) are regarded as the ancestors of all the nations (see ch. 10). **13:** Ancients imagined the rainbow as God’s weapon (bow) from which the lightnings of his arrows were shot (Ps. 7.12-13; Hab. 3.9-11). God places his weapon in the heavens as a *sign*, or visible token, that his wrath has abated.

9.18-27: Noah’s curse upon Canaan. **20:** In the new age, Noah was the *first tiller of the soil*. His success in agriculture fulfilled the prophecy made at his birth (5.29). **22:** Since the curse was later put on Canaan rather than Ham (v. 26), it is likely that Canaan was the actor originally.

and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said,

"Cursed be Canaan;
a slave of slaves shall he be to
his brothers."

²⁶ He also said,

"Blessed be the LORD my God
be Shem;"

and let Canaan be his slave.

²⁷ God enlarge Japheth,
and let him dwell in the tents
of Shem;

and let Canaan be his slave."

²⁸ After the flood Noah lived three hundred and fifty years. ²⁹ All the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

10 These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; sons were born to them after the flood.

² The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³ The sons of Gomer: Ash'kenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴ The sons of Javan: Eli'shah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Do'danim. ⁵ From these the coastland peoples spread. These are the sons of Japheth" in their lands, each with his own lan-

guage, by their families, in their nations.

⁶ The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁷ The sons of Cush: Seba, Hav'ilah, Sabtah, Ra'amah, and Sab'teca. The sons of Ra'amah: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸ Cush became the father of Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. ⁹ He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." ¹⁰ The beginning of his kingdom was Ba'bel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar. ¹¹ From that land he went into Assyria, and built Nin'veh, Reho'both-Ir, Calah, and ¹² Resen between Nin'veh and Calah; that is the great city. ¹³ Egypt became the father of Ludim, An'amim, Leha'bim, Naph-tu'him, ¹⁴ Pathru'sim, Caslu'him (whence came the Philistines), and Caph'torim.

¹⁵ Canaan became the father of Sidon his first-born, and Heth, ¹⁶ and the Jeb'usites, the Amorites, the Gir'gashites, ¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸ the Ar'vadites, the Zem'arites, and the Ha'mathites. Afterward the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. ¹⁹ And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom,

m Or Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem

n Compare verses 20, 31. Heb lacks These are the sons of Japheth

24: Here Noah's youngest son is clearly Canaan, not Ham as in v. 22. **25:** The curse implies that Canaan's subjugation to Israel was the result of Canaanite sexual perversions (Lev.18.24-30). **26:** *Shem*, 10.21. **27:** *Japheth*, 10.2-5. The verse may refer to the Philistines, one of the seapoples who dwelt in the tents of Shem, i.e. conquered the coast of Canaan.

10.1-32: The table of the nations provides a background of world history for the call of Abraham (ch. 12). **1:** This list, which connects with 5.32, was probably drawn from the book of generations (5.1). The original unity of mankind is represented by the view that all the nations originated from Noah's three sons (9.19). Although the various "families" were separated by language and land (vv. 5.20,31), the present list is arranged primarily on the basis of political rather than ethnic considerations. **2-5:** *The sons of Japheth* (9.27) had their political center in Asia Minor, the former territory of the Hittites (Heth, v. 15). The spread of the coastland peoples, including the Philistines (see 9.27 n.), reflects population movements in the Aegean area about 1200 B.C. **6-20:** *The sons of Ham* lived in the Egyptian orbit. Canaan is included because it was nominally under Egyptian control from 1500-1200 B.C. **8-12:** An old fragment of tradition relates how Nimrod, a successful warrior, built a kingdom in Shinar (Babylonia) and Assyria. **15-20:** *Heth* (the Hittites), who once established a powerful empire in Asia Minor, disappeared as a world power in the twelfth century B.C. Here they are mentioned along with other Canaanite peoples; e.g. the *Jebusites* (located around Jerusalem), the *Amorites* (natives of

Gomor'rah, Admah, and Zeboi'im, as far as Lasha.²⁰ These are the sons of Ham, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

21 To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born.²² The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpach'shad, Lud, and Aram.²³ The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.²⁴ Arpach'shad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber.²⁵ To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg,^o for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan.²⁶ Joktan became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarma'veth, Jerah,²⁷ Hador'am, Uzal, Diklah,²⁸ Obal, Abim'a-el, Sheba,²⁹ Ophir, Hav'ilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan.³⁰ The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east.³¹ These are the sons of Shem, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

Now the whole earth had one language and few words.² And as men migrated from the east, they found

a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built.⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.⁷ Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.⁹ Therefore its name was called Ba'bel, because there the LORD confused^p the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

10 These are the descendants of Shem. When Shem was a hundred years old, he became the father of Arpach'

^o That is *Division*

^p Compare Heb *balal*, confuse

the Palestinian hill country), the *Hivites* (perhaps Horites or Hurrians; see 34.2). 21-31: *Shem* is the father of Semitic peoples, *the children of Eber*, that is, all "Hebrews," including those Hebrews who later became Israel. During 1500-1200 B.C. waves of Hebrews came into Syria-Palestine and eventually established states, such as *Aram* or Syria (v. 23), Moab, Edom, and Israel.

11.1-9: **The tower of Babel.** The LORD judged man's presumptuous effort by scattering the peoples and confusing their tongues. 1: *One language*, compare 10.5,20,31. This tradition is clearly independent of and different from the table of nations. 2: *Shinar*, 10.10. The *plain* is the Tigris-Euphrates basin. 4: In the eyes of nomads Mesopotamian city culture was characterized by the ziggurat, a pyramidal temple tower whose summit was believed to be the gateway to heaven. 6: 3.22. 7: *Let us*, see 1.26-27 n. 8: The enterprise, motivated by a Promethean desire for unity, fame, and security (v. 4), ended in misunderstanding and thus arose the various peoples. 9: *Babel*, meaning "gate of God," is here interpreted by the Hebrew verb "confuse" (see note p). The story, now told to show the LORD's judgment upon the continuing sin of mankind, once explained the origin of languages and the cultural glory of Babylon, the center of Hammurabi's empire.

11.10-32: **Genealogies to Abraham.** The line of Shem (10.21-31) leads to Terah's three sons (v. 26) and narrows down to Abraham, showing how God chose Abraham and his seed from all the families of the earth. 10: Here begin further quotations from the book of genealogies (5.1).

shad two years after the flood;¹¹ and Shem lived after the birth of Arpach'shad five hundred years, and had other sons and daughters.

12 When Arpach'shad had lived thirty-five years, he became the father of Shelah;¹³ and Arpach'shad lived after the birth of Shelah four hundred and three years, and had other sons and daughters.

14 When Shelah had lived thirty years, he became the father of Eber;¹⁵ and Shelah lived after the birth of Eber four hundred and three years, and had other sons and daughters.

16 When Eber had lived thirty-four years, he became the father of Peleg;¹⁷ and Eber lived after the birth of Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and had other sons and daughters.

18 When Peleg had lived thirty years, he became the father of Re'u;¹⁹ and Peleg lived after the birth of Re'u two hundred and nine years, and had other sons and daughters.

20 When Re'u had lived thirty-two years, he became the father of Serug;²¹ and Re'u lived after the birth of Serug two hundred and seven years, and had other sons and daughters.

22 When Serug had lived thirty years, he became the father of Nahor;²³ and Serug lived after the birth of Nahor two hundred years, and had other sons and daughters.

24 When Nahor had lived twenty-nine years, he became the father of Terah;²⁵ and Nahor lived after the birth of Terah a hundred and nineteen years, and had other sons and daughters.

26 When Terah had lived seventy years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 Now these are the descendants of Terah. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot.²⁸ Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chalde'ans.²⁹ And Abram and Nahor took wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sar'ai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah.³⁰ Now Sar'ai was barren; she had no child.

31 Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sar'ai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chalde'ans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there.³² The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

12 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."⁴

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.⁵ And

q Or in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed

27: *Abram*, see 17.5. **30:** *Sarai*, see 17.15. **31:** *Haran*, in northwest Mesopotamia, was Abraham's ancestral home according to 24.10 (compare 29.4). Extra-biblical sources show that several of the names in the genealogy, e.g. Peleg (v. 16), Serug (v. 20), Terah and Nahor (v. 24), were place-names in this region, variously called Paddan-aram or Aram-naharaim. The migration from Mesopotamia into Canaan was a phase of population movements in the early part of the second millennium B.C., occasioned by the influx of Amorites from the Arabian desert.

12.1-8: God's call of Abraham is sketched against the background of divided mankind. **1-3:** Israel, represented by Abraham, is chosen to play a decisive role in God's historical purpose (Is.19.24; Acts 3.25-26; Rom.4.13). The promise includes receiving a land, becoming a great nation, and mediating blessing to other peoples. **1:** *Your country*, see 11.31 n. **4:** By breaking ties of land and kindred (v. 1) and responding obediently to the LORD's summons, Abraham

Abram took Sar'ai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and the persons that they had gotten in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^r of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ Thence he removed to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sar'ai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful to behold; ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account." ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he

had sheep, oxen, he-asses, menservants, maidservants, she-asses, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sar'ai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her, and be gone." ²⁰ And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him; and they set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had.

13 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

² Now Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. ³ And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place where he had made an altar at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. ⁵ And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶ so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, ⁷ and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. At that time the Canaanites and the Per'izzites dwelt in the land.

⁸ Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me,

^r Or terebinth

typifies the man of faith (Heb.11.8). **6:** *Shechem*, located at the commercial crossroads of Canaan in the pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, was a flourishing city during the second millennium B.C. (Jg. ch. 9). Nearby was the *oak of Moreh* ("oracle giver"), a sacred tree (35.4; Dt.11.30; Jos.24.26; Jg.9.37).

12.10-13.1: *Sarah in jeopardy.* God's promise of a posterity was temporarily eclipsed in Egypt where Sarah, the ancestress of Israel, was almost taken into Pharaoh's harem. **13:** Sarah was Abraham's *sister*, i.e. half-sister, according to 20.12. The narrative does not moralize about the white lie but rather portrays the LORD's rescue of Sarah from the jeopardy into which Abraham's self-interest had placed her (compare ch. 20; 26.1-11).

13.2-18: *Abraham and Lot.* The LORD's promise of the land hung in the balance of a decision, but providentially Lot, the ancestor of Moab, chose the region around Sodom. **5-7:** The patriarchs are represented as living a semi-nomadic life in the midst of the Canaanites; thus

and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen; for we are kinsmen.⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.”¹⁰ And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jordan valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zo’ar; this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomor’rah.¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan valley, and Lot journeyed east; thus they separated from each other.¹² Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, while Lot dwelt among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;¹⁵ for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants for ever.¹⁶ I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your descendants also can be counted.¹⁷ Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.”¹⁸ So Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks^s of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the LORD.

14 In the days of Am’raphel king of Shinar, Ar’ioch king of Ella’sar, Ched-or-lao’mer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goi’im,² these kings

made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomor’rah, Shinab king of Admah, Sheme’ber king of Zeboi’im, and the king of Bela (that is, Zo’ar).³ And all these joined forces in the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).⁴ Twelve years they had served Ched-or-lao’mer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.⁵ In the fourteenth year Ched-or-lao’mer and the kings who were with him came and subdued the Reph’aim in Ash’teroth-karna’im, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Sha’veh-kiriatha’im,⁶ and the Horites in their Mount Se’ir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness;⁷ then they turned back and came to Enmish’pat (that is, Kadesh), and subdued all the country of the Amal’ekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Haz’azon-ta’mar.⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomor’rah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboi’im, and the king of Bela (that is, Zo’ar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim⁹ with Ched-or-lao’mer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goi’im, Am’raphel king of Shinar, and Ar’ioch king of Ella’sar, four kings against five.¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits; and as the kings of Sodom and Gomor’rah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the mountain.¹¹ So the enemy took all the goods of Sodom and Gomor’rah, and all their provisions, and went their way;¹² they also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13 Then one who had escaped came, and told Abram the Hebrew, who

s Or terebinths

adequate pasture land was vital to the *herdsmen*. **10:** The fertility of the *Jordan valley* is compared to the *garden of the LORD* (2.8–10) and the Nile valley. *Zoar*, 19.20–22. *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 19.1–29. **11:** Lot thus became the ancestor of Moab and Ammon (19.30–38). **14–17:** The promise of 12.7 is renewed. **18:** *Mamre* was an ancient sacred place, slightly north of Hebron, with which Abraham was associated.

14.1–24: An alliance of four eastern kings was defeated by Abraham’s small forces. This independent tradition, which pictures Abraham as a military hero in the field of world politics, deviates from the usual portrayal of the patriarchs as peaceful semi-nomads. **1:** None of the kings can be identified with certainty. *Shinar*, 10.10. *Ellasar*, i.e. Larsa. **2–4:** The rebellious city-kings held sway in the region of the Dead Sea before its lower basin was covered with water. **5–7:** The object of the invasion may have been to secure the trade routes to Egypt and southern

was living by the oaks^s of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner; these were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and routed them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his goods, and the women and the people.

¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Ched-or-lao'mer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Mel-chiz'edek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,

maker of heaven and earth;

²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!"

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. ²¹ And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself." ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, maker of heaven and earth, ²³ that I would not take a thread or a sandal-thong or anything that is yours,

lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' ²⁴ I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me; let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

² But Abram said, "O Lord God, what wilt thou give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Behold, thou hast given me no offspring; and a slave born in my house will be my heir." ⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ And he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.

⁷ And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chalde'ans, to give you this land to possess." ⁸ But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹ He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in two, and laid each half over against

s Or terebinths

Arabia. **13:** *Mamre* here is the name of a person (compare 13.18). **14:** *Dan* was known as Laish in the early period (Jg.18.29). **17:** *The King's Valley*, near Jerusalem (2 Sam.18.18). **18:** *Salem* is a name for Jerusalem (Ps.76.2), where in pre-Israelite times *God Most High* (El Elyon) was worshiped as the high god of the pantheon. **19-20:** Melchizedek, the priest of the Canaanite cult, blesses Abraham in the name of his god, *maker of heaven and earth*. **22:** Here *God Most High* is identified with the LORD, the God of Israel (17.1; Num.24.16; Ps.46.4). The mysterious Melchizedek was later interpreted messianically (Ps.110.4; Heb.7.1-17).

15.1-21: *The covenant with Abraham*. The LORD ratified his promise even though Abraham still had no heir. **1:** *Your shield*, i.e. divine protector (Ps.28.7; 33.20). Abraham's *reward* is his numerous posterity (13.14-17). **2-3:** Inscriptions from Nuzi in Mesopotamia (middle of the second millennium) show the law there stipulated that a slave could be adopted as the heir in case of childlessness, a practice which is apparently presupposed here. **6:** *He believed*, i.e. put his trust in the LORD's promise even when there was no tangible evidence. *Righteousness*, see 6.9 n.; 7.1. **7:** 11.31. The covenant ceremony described in vv. 7-12 and 17-18 rests on an early tradition, as evidenced by the ancient ritual of making a covenant by cutting animals in two

the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram; and lo, a dread and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know of a surety that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be slaves there, and they will be oppressed for four hundred years; ¹⁴ but I will bring judgment on the nation which they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹ the land of the Ken'ites, the Ken'izzites, the Kad'monites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the Reph'aim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gir'gashites and the Jeb'usites."

16 Now Sar'ai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar; ² and Sar'ai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me

from bearing children; go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sar'ai. ³ So, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, Sar'ai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. ⁴ And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵ And Sar'ai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my maid to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" ⁶ But Abram said to Sar'ai, "Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sar'ai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

7 The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸ And he said, "Hagar, maid of Sar'ai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sar'ai." ⁹ The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her." ¹⁰ The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will so greatly multiply your descendants that they cannot be numbered for multitude." ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Behold, you are with child, and shall bear a son; you shall call his name Ish'mael;" because

t That is God hears

(Jer.34.17-19) and passing between the parts. **12:** Abraham fell into a deep sleep (compare 2.21), in which he received the revelation (Job 4.13; 33.15). **13-16:** An inserted tradition explains the delay in the fulfilment of the promise, referring to the Egyptian oppression for 400 years (Ex. 12.40) and the victorious Exodus. *The iniquity of the Amorites* (10.16) was the sexual corruption which led to their downfall (9.25 n.). **17-18:** Continuation of vv. 7-12. The presence of God is symbolized by fire (see Ex.3.2 n.) passing between the pieces. *A covenant*, see 17.2 n. The ideal boundaries of the promised land—from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates—were those of David's empire (Dt.11.24; 2 Sam.8.3; compare 1 Kg.4.21; 8.65).

16.1-16: *The birth of Ishmael.* **2:** In antiquity both barrenness and fertility were traced to God (20.17-18; 30.2; 33.4; 1 Sam.1.6). According to ancient custom, a wife could give her maid to her husband and claim the child as her own (30.3,9). **4-6:** The inferior Hagar felt superior to Sarai and threatened to take her mistress's place (Pr.30.23) as the ancestress of Israel. **7:** Here *the angel of the LORD* is not a heavenly being subordinate to God but the LORD himself in earthly manifestation, as is clear from v. 13 (compare 21.17,19; Ex.14.19). **12:** *A wild ass of a man*

the LORD has given heed to your affliction. ¹² He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against every man and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen." ¹³ So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "Thou art a God of seeing"; for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?" ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-la'hai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ish'mael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ish'mael to Abram.

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty;" walk before me, and be blameless. ² And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." ³ Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴ "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be Abram,^x but your name shall be Abraham;" for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their

generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸ And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised; every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house, or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, ¹³ both he that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money, shall be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

15 And God said to Abraham, "As for Sar'ai your wife, you shall not call

u Cn: Heb have I even here seen after him who sees me?
v That is the well of one who sees and lives
w Heb El Shaddai x That is exalted father
y Here taken to mean father of a multitude

describes the bedouin freedom of the Ishmaelites in the southern wilderness (25.16–18). **13:** *The God of seeing* was the name of the deity of the sacred place, now identified with Israel's God. On Hagar's question, compare Ex.19.21; 33.20; Jg.6.23; 13.22.

17.1–27: *The covenant of circumcision.* This account from the priestly tradition is another version of the covenant with Abraham (compare the early tradition, 15.7–21). **1:** *God Almighty* (El Shaddai), meaning "God, the One of the Mountains," was a divine name current in the pre-Mosaic period (Ex.6.2–3). Perhaps it was brought with the patriarchs from Mesopotamia. **2:** Covenant is a term of relationship between a superior and an inferior party, the former "making" or "establishing" (v. 7) the bond (9.9–17). **5:** The new relationship involved receiving a new name, *Abraham* (a dialectal variant of Abram). The name, which means "the (divine) Father is exalted," is artificially explained by its similarity to the Hebrew for *father of a multitude*. The latter refers to the nations whose ancestry was traced to Abraham (v. 16; 28.3; 35.11; 48.4), e.g. Edomites and Ishmaelites. **8:** In the priestly view, the patriarchs were wanderers or sojourners who looked forward to their promised inheritance in Canaan (21.23; 23.4; 28.4; 36.7; 37.1; 47.9). **9–14:** To keep the covenant is to practice circumcision, an ancient rite which was practiced by some of Israel's neighbors and whose origin is explained by various traditions (Ex.4.24–26; Jos.5.2–9). Circumcision is an external *sign* (v. 11) of membership in the covenant commu-

her name Sar'ai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her; I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "O that Ish'mael might live in thy sight!"

¹⁹ God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. ² I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

²⁰ As for Ish'mael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

²¹ But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year."

²² When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

²³ Then Abraham took Ish'mael his son and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And Ish'mael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ That very day Abraham and his son Ish'mael were circumcised; ²⁷ and all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a

foreigner, were circumcised with him.

18 And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks^a of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, ³ and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I fetch a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures^b of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes."

⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸ Then he took curds, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹ They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." ¹⁰ The LORD said, "I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleas-

^a That is he laughs

^a Or terebinths

^b Heb seahs

nity. Unlike the Noachian covenant (9.9–17), the Abrahamic covenant in your flesh (v. 13) is binding on Israel only. **15:** Sarah, meaning "princess," is a variant of Sarai. **17:** 18.11–15. **18–20:** 16.10–12.

18.1–33: The LORD's visit to Abraham and Abraham's intercession for Sodom. **1:** The oaks of Mamre, see 13.18 n. **2–8:** A fine description of oriental courtesy and hospitality. When the visitors appeared at the noontime siesta, Abraham did not recognize them as divine beings (Heb.13.2). The relation of the three men to the LORD (v. 1) is difficult. All three angels (19.1) may represent the LORD (see 16.7 n.); thus the plurality becomes a single person in vv. 10, 13. On the other hand, v. 22 and 19.1 suggest that the LORD is one of the three, the other two being his attendants. **9–15:** Various traditions (17.17–19; 21.6) interpret the name of Isaac, meaning "he

ure?" ¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard^c for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, in the spring, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

¹⁶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him?^d ¹⁹ No, for I have chosen^e him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." ²⁰ Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomor'rah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know."

²² So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham still stood before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham drew near, and said, "Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou then destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked!

Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶ And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Abraham answered, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Wilt thou destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ Again he spoke to him, and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹ He said, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." ³³ And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

19 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening; and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed himself with his face to the earth, ² and said, "My lords, turn aside, I pray you, to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No;

^c Or wonderful

^d Or in him all the nations of the earth shall be blessed

^e Heb known

laughs." **17-19:** Because Abraham is chosen for a special role (12.1-3), he is taken into the LORD's counsel (compare 6.13-22), for Sodom will become an example to future generations. **23-33:** Ancient Israelite thought, with its strong sense of communal solidarity, held that the wickedness of a few contaminates the whole community (Dt.21.1-9). Here the issue is put the other way around: can the righteousness of a few, even a minority of ten, have a saving influence upon the whole?

19.1-38: The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah impressed itself deeply upon later generations as an example of God's total judgment upon appalling wickedness (Dt.29.23; Is.1.9; Jer.49.18; Am.4.11). **1:** Two angels, see 18.2-8 n. **6-11:** Compare the crime of Gibeah (Jg.19.22-

we will spend the night in the street.”
³ But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.
⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; ⁵ and they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.”
⁶ Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, ⁷ and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. ⁸ Behold, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹ But they said, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came to sojourn, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door. ¹⁰ But the men put forth their hands and brought Lot into the house to them, and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves groping for the door.

¹² Then the men said to Lot, “Have you any one else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or any one you have in the city, bring them out of the place; ¹³ for we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” ¹⁴ So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, “Up, get out of this

place; for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

¹⁵ When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶ But he lingered; so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him forth and set him outside the city. ¹⁷ And when they had brought them forth, they^f said, “Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley; flee to the hills, lest you be consumed.” ¹⁸ And Lot said to them, “Oh, no, my lords; ¹⁹ behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me, and I die. ²⁰ Behold, yonder city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!” ²¹ He said to him, “Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. ²² Make haste, escape there; for I can do nothing till you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zo’ar.^g
²³ The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zo’ar.

²⁴ Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomor’rah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; ²⁵ and he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But Lot’s wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. ²⁷ And Abraham went early in the

^f Gk Syr Vg: Heb he ^g That is Little

30). The episode is told to show the unbridled lusts of Sodom. **5:** *Know* refers to sexual relations (v. 8), here homosexual. **8:** Once guests had eaten in his house, Lot had to obey the law of oriental hospitality which guaranteed protection. Thus his proposal to hand over his daughters showed his determination to put first his obligation as a host. **20–22:** *Zoar*, meaning “small,” was a town at the southern end of the Dead Sea which survived the calamity. **24:** *Brimstone and fire*, a memory of a catastrophe in remote times when seismic activity and the explosion of subterranean gases changed the face of the area, which was formerly fertile (13.10). **26:** An old tradition to account for bizarre salt formations in the area such as may be seen today on

morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD; ²⁸ and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

²⁹ So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.

³⁰ Now Lot went up out of Zo'ar, and dwelt in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to dwell in Zo'ar; so he dwelt in a cave with his two daughters. ³¹ And the first-born said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. ³² Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring through our father." ³³ So they made their father drink wine that night; and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. ³⁴ And on the next day, the first-born said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring through our father." ³⁵ So they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. ³⁶ Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. ³⁷ The first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸ The younger also bore a son, and called his name

Ben-ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

20 From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. ² And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abim'elech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. ³ But God came to Abim'elech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man, because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife." ⁴ Now Abim'elech had not approached her; so he said, "Lord, wilt thou slay an innocent people? ⁵ Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." ⁶ Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷ Now then restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you, and all that are yours."

⁸ So Abim'elech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told them all these things; and the men were very much afraid. ⁹ Then Abim'elech called Abraham, and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." ¹⁰ And Abim'elech said to Abraham, "What were you thinking of, that you did this thing?" ¹¹ Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, There is no

Jebel Usdum. **30-38:** A story which explains the origin of the Moabites and Ammonites, neighbors of Israel.

20.1-18: Abraham and Sarah in Gerar. This story parallels that of 12.10-20 (compare 26.6-11). Here, however, the narrator is more concerned with the ethical problems involved. **1:** *From there*, i.e. Mamre (18.1). **2:** Compare 12.11-13. **3-7:** Ethically sensitive, the narrator insists that Abimelech was innocent, for he did not go near Sarah. **7:** To Abraham is attributed the intercessory role of a *prophet* (18.22-33; compare Num.12.13; 21.7; 1 Sam.12.19-23). **11-12:** Abraham's excuses. Marriage with a half-sister was permitted in ancient times (2 Sam.13.13) but

fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.

¹² Besides she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³ And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.' ¹⁴ Then Abim'elech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah his wife to him. ¹⁵ And Abim'elech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." ¹⁶ To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; it is your vindication in the eyes of all who are with you; and before every one you are righted." ¹⁷ Then Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abim'elech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. ¹⁸ For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abim'elech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

21 The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. ² And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; every one who hears will laugh over me." ⁷ And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle

children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

⁸ And the child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. ¹⁰ So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac."

¹¹ And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the lad and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your descendants be named." ¹³ And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."

¹⁴ So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

¹⁵ When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went, and sat down over against him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Let me not look upon the death of the child." And as she sat over against him, the child lifted up his voiceⁱ and wept. ¹⁷ And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not; for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is." ¹⁸ Arise,

^h Gk Vg: Heb lacks with her son Isaac
ⁱ Gk: Heb she lifted up her voice

later was forbidden (Lev.18.9,11; 20.17). **16:** *Vindication*, i.e. a gift to induce everyone to overlook the injury done to Sarah.

21.1-21: Isaac and Ishmael. Although Isaac was designated to continue Abraham's line, Ishmael too was promised a future. **4:** On circumcision, see 17.9-14 n. **6:** See 18.9-15 n. **9-10:** The jealous mother could not stand seeing the two boys on the same level, even at play. **11-14:** Compare Abraham's different attitude in the parallel story (ch. 16). **14:** *Beer-sheba* is the locale of the Isaac stories, just as Abraham is associated primarily with Mamre or Hebron (see 13.18 n.). **17:** *The angel of God*, see 16.7 n. *God has heard:* a play on the name Ishmael, meaning "God

lift up the lad, and hold him fast with your hand; for I will make him a great nation.”¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink.²⁰ And God was with the lad, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

22 At that time Abim’elech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, “God is with you in all that you do;²³ now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but as I have dealt loyally with you, you will deal with me and with the land where you have sojourned.”²⁴ And Abraham said, “I will swear.”

25 When Abraham complained to Abim’elech about a well of water which Abim’elech’s servants had seized,²⁶ Abim’elech said, “I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today.”²⁷ So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abim’elech, and the two men made a covenant.²⁸ Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock apart.²⁹ And Abim’elech said to Abraham, “What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set apart?”³⁰ He said, “These seven ewe lambs you will take

from my hand, that you may be a witness for me that I dug this well.”

³¹ Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba; because there both of them swore an oath.³² So they made a covenant at Beer-sheba. Then Abim’elech and Phicol the commander of his army rose up and returned to the land of the Philistines.³³ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.³⁴ And Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines.

22 After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.”² He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Mori’ah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; and he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the ass; I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife.

j That is Well of seven or Well of the oath

hears” (16.11). **20:** Though Ishmael was not the heir of the promise, *God was with the lad*, destining him to be the ancestor of Bedouin tribes of the southern wilderness (16.12).

21.22–34: Abraham’s dispute with Abimelech. This story contains two traditional explanations of the name Beer-sheba. According to one, Abimelech guaranteed Abraham’s loyalty by an oath. Hence Beer-sheba means “well of the oath” (v. 31). According to the other (vv. 25–26, 28–30), a dispute over a well resulted in a covenant, seven ewe-lambs being taken in witness. Thus the alternate meaning, “Well of seven.” **33: The Everlasting God** (El Olam) is an ancient divine name, once associated with the pre-Israelite sanctuary of Beer-sheba, which Israel adopted as a title for the LORD (Is.40.28). **34: The land of the Philistines** is an anachronism, for the Philistines came into Canaan after 1200 B.C. (see 10.2–5 n.).

22.1–19: The testing of Abraham. The present story portrays a miracle of faith: Abraham received back the promise after showing he had the faith to surrender his only heir. In its oldest form the story told how the Deity relaxed his claim upon the first-born and provided an animal for a substitute (Ex.13.2,11–16; 22.29; 34.19–20). **1: Tested**, i.e. put under trial to see whether he would obey in faith (12.4; compare Heb.11.17–19). **2: Moriah** is unknown. In 2 Chr.3.1 it is identified with Jerusalem. Samaritan tradition locates the scene on Mount Gerizim (Shechem;

So they went both of them together.
⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

⁹ When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.
¹⁰ Then Abraham put forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I."
¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place The LORD will provide;^k as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."^l

¹⁵ And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶ and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸ and by your descendants shall all the nations of the

earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice." ¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

²⁰ Now after these things it was told Abraham, "Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: ²¹ Uz the first-born, Buz his brother, Kemu'el the father of Aram, ²² Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethu'el." ²³ Bethu'el became the father of Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. ²⁴ Moreover, his concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Ma'acah.

23 Sarah lived a hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. ² And Sarah died at Kir'iath-ar'ba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. ³ And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and said to the Hittites, ⁴ "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." ⁵ The Hittites answered Abraham, ⁶ "Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our sepulchres; none of us will withhold from you his sepulchre, or hinder you from burying your dead." ⁷ Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land. ⁸ And he said to them, "If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar, ⁹ that he may give me the cave of Mach-pe'lah, which he owns; it is at the end of

k Or see l Or he will be seen

compare 12.6), three days' journey (22.4) from Beer-sheba (v. 19; 21.33). **11:** *The angel of the LORD*, see 16.7 n. **14:** *God will provide*, see v. 8. **20-24:** The descendants of Abraham's brother, Nahor (11.27-29). The purpose of this Aramean genealogy is to introduce Bethuel, Rebekah's father, thus preparing for ch. 24.

23.1-20: Abraham's purchase of a family burial place. **2:** *Kiriath-arba*, the older name of Hebron (Jos.14.15; 15.13; Jg.1.10). **3:** *The Hittites* belonged at that time to the pre-Israelite population, *the people of the land* (v. 7; see 10.15 n.). **4-16:** Legal transactions were handled by elders at the city gate (v. 10). **9:** Abraham insists on payment of *the full price* in order to obtain

his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as a possession for a burying place.”¹⁰ Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city,¹¹ “No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it; in the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you; bury your dead.”

¹² Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.¹³ And he said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “But if you will, hear me; I will give the price of the field; accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there.”¹⁴ Ephron answered Abraham,¹⁵ “My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.”¹⁶ Abraham agreed with Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants.

¹⁷ So the field of Ephron in Machpe’lah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave which was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, was made over¹⁸ to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city.¹⁹ After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Mach-pe’lah east of Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.²⁰ The field and the cave that is in it were made over to Abraham as a possession for a burying place by the Hittites.

24 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.² And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his house, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh,³ and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell,⁴ but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”⁵ The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land; must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”⁶ Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there.”⁷ The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your descendants I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.⁸ But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.”⁹ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

¹⁰ Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose, and went to Mesopota’mia, to the city of Nahor.¹¹ And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water.¹² And he said, “O LORD, God

legal title to the land. **19:** The cave of Machpelah was the tomb of Abraham and Sarah (25.9–10), Isaac (35.29) and Rebekah (49.31), Jacob (50.13) and Leah (49.31).

24.1–67: Finding a wife for Isaac among kinsman in Haran. **2:** The servant was perhaps Abraham’s major-domo, Eliezer (15.2). Putting the hand under the thigh, an old form of oath taking (47.29), reflected the view that the fountain of reproductivity was sacred to the deity (see 16.2 n.). **3:** Aloofness from the Canaanites was based upon fear of the corrupting influence of Canaanite religion (Ex.34.15–16; Dt.7.3–4). **7: His angel**, see 16.7 n. **10: The city of Nahor**, near Haran (see 11.31 n.). **12: Steadfast love** is a covenant term, referring to the faithful assistance and loyal love of the LORD towards those bound to him by covenant. The Hebrew word is

of my master Abraham, grant me success today, I pray thee, and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. ¹³ Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴ Let the maiden to whom I shall say, 'Pray let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac. By this I shall know that thou hast shown steadfast love to my master."

¹⁵ Before he had done speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethu'el the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar upon her shoulder. ¹⁶ The maiden was very fair to look upon, a virgin, whom no man had known. She went down to the spring, and filled her jar, and came up. ¹⁷ Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, "Pray give me a little water to drink from your jar." ¹⁸ She said, "Drink, my lord"; and she quickly let down her jar upon her hand, and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw for your camels also, until they have done drinking." ²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹ The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not.

²² When the camels had done drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, ²³ and said, "Tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge in?" ²⁴ She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethu'el the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." ²⁵ She added, "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." ²⁶ The man bowed his head and worshiped

the LORD, ²⁷ and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen."

²⁸ Then the maiden ran and told her mother's household about these things. ²⁹ Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran out to the man, to the spring. ³⁰ When he saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man; and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. ³¹ He said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD; why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." ³² So the man came into the house; and Laban ungirded the camels, and gave him straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³ Then food was set before him to eat; but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand." He said, "Speak on."

³⁴ So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, camels and asses. ³⁶ And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has. ³⁷ My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; ³⁸ but you shall go to my father's house and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son.' ³⁹ I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' ⁴⁰ But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and

translated thus in the RSV only when it alludes to God's relations with man. **14:** The story assumes that the girl had been *appointed* by the LORD to be Isaac's wife; therefore events unfold according to divine providence (see vv. 21,26–27,50,56). **15:** 22.20–23. **62:** *Beer-lahai-roi*, 16.14.

prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my kindred and from my father's house; ⁴¹ then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my kindred; and if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

42 "I came today to the spring, and said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now thou wilt prosper the way which I go, ⁴³ behold, I am standing by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Pray give me a little water from your jar to drink," ⁴⁴ and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also," let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

45 "Before I had done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Pray let me drink.' ⁴⁶ She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. ⁴⁷ Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethu'el, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. ⁴⁸ Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. ⁴⁹ Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

50 Then Laban and Bethu'el answered, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good. ⁵¹ Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the LORD. ⁵³ And the

servant brought forth jewelry of silver and of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. ⁵⁴ And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me back to my master." ⁵⁵ Her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." ⁵⁶ But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way; let me go that I may go to my master." ⁵⁷ They said, "We will call the maiden, and ask her." ⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah, and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go." ⁵⁹ So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, be the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them!" ⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and rode upon the camels and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 Now Isaac had come from Beer-la'hai-roi, and was dwelling in the Negeb. ⁶³ And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there were camels coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel, ⁶⁵ and said to the servant, "Who is the man yonder, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought her into the tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

ⁿ Syr Tg: Heb from coming to
^o Heb adds Sarah his mother

25 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Ketu'rah.² She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Mid'ian, Ishbak, and Shuah.³ Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Ashu'rim, Letu'shim, and Le-um'mim.⁴ The sons of Mid'ian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoch, Abi'da, and Elda'ah. All these were the children of Ketu'rah.⁵ Abraham gave all he had to Isaac.⁶ But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.

⁷ These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, a hundred and seventy-five years.⁸ Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.⁹ Isaac and Ish'mael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpe'lah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre,¹⁰ the field which Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife.¹¹ After the death of Abraham God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac dwelt at Beer-la'hai-roi.

¹² These are the descendants of Ish'mael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham.¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ish'mael, named in the order of their birth: Neba'ioth, the first-born of Ish'mael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa,¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Ked'emah.¹⁶ These are the sons of Ish'mael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encamp-

ments, twelve princes according to their tribes.¹⁷ (These are the years of the life of Ish'mael, a hundred and thirty-seven years; he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his kindred.)¹⁸ They dwelt from Hav'ilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria; he settled^p over against all his people.

¹⁹ These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac,²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he took to wife Rebekah, the daughter of Bethu'el the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹ And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.²² The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is thus, why do I live?"^q So she went to inquire of the LORD.²³ And the LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples, born of you,
shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the
other,

the elder shall serve the younger."

²⁴ When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.²⁵ The first came forth red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they called his name Esau.²⁶ Afterward his brother came forth, and his hand had taken hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob.^r Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

²⁷ When the boys grew up, Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field,

^p Heb fell

^q Syr: Heb obscure

^r That is *He takes by the heel* or *He supplants*

25.1-18: The death of Abraham. 1-6: The ancestry of Arabic tribes, including Midian (Ex. 2.15b-22; 18.1), is traced to Abraham through his other wife, Keturah. 9: See ch. 23. **12-18:** An excerpt from the book of generations (5.1). 16: Like later Israel, the Ishmaelites were organized into twelve tribes, each with a tribal prince. 18: 16.7,14.

25.19-34: The rivalry of Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom). 20: Paddan-aram, see 11.31 n. 21: See 16.2 n. 22-23: Rebekah went to a sanctuary to inquire of the LORD and received the oracular answer in v. 23. 25: The Hebrew word *red* ('admoni) is a play on the word Edom ('edhom; v. 30); *hairy* (se'ar) is a play on Seir, the region of the Edomites (32.3). 26: Jacob is interpreted by a play on the Hebrew word for "heel," i.e. "he takes by the heel" or "he supplants" (Hos. 12.3; Jer. 9.4). 27-28: The two boys typify the hunter and the shepherd, two rival ways of life

while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. ²⁸ Isaac loved Esau, because he ate of his game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was boiling pottage, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. ³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red pottage, for I am famished!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.^s) ³¹ Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." ³² Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" ³³ Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

26 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar, to Abim'elech king of the Philistines. ² And the LORD appeared to him, and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will fulfil the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give to your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves: ⁵ because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

6 So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. ⁷ When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister"; for he feared to say, "My wife," thinking, "lest the men of the place should kill

me for the sake of Rebekah"; because she was fair to look upon. ⁸ When he had been there a long time, Abim'elech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac fondling Rebekah his wife. ⁹ So Abim'elech called Isaac, and said, "Behold, she is your wife; how then could you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I thought, 'Lest I die because of her.'" ¹⁰ Abim'elech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." ¹¹ So Abim'elech warned all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be put to death."

12 And Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, ¹³ and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. ¹⁴ He had possessions of flocks and herds, and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ (Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) ¹⁶ And Abim'elech said to Isaac, "Go away from us; for you are much mightier than we."

17 So Isaac departed from there, and encamped in the valley of Gerar and dwelt there. ¹⁸ And Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the names which his father had given them. ¹⁹ But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of springing water, ²⁰ the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled

^s That is *Red* ^t Heb *today*

(4.2). 31-34: The *birthright* refers to the rights of the eldest son: leadership of the family and a double share of the inheritance (Dt.21.15-17). The caricature of Esau as a dull person, easily outwitted on an empty stomach, is intended to explain why Israel gained ascendancy over Edom (2 Sam.8.12-14; 2 Chr.25.11-24) even though the latter became a nation first (36.31-39).

26.1-34: *Stories about Isaac*. 1: *The former famine*, 12.10. *The Philistines*, see 21.34 n. 3-5: The promise, first given to Abraham (12.2-3,7), is reaffirmed to Isaac. 7-11: 12.10-20 and ch. 20. 12-33: Isaac is portrayed as a semi-nomad who settled down long enough to raise crops

with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek,^u because they contended with him.²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also; so he called its name Sitnah.^v ²² And he moved from there and dug another well, and over that they did not quarrel; so he called its name Rehoboth,^w saying, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

²³ From there he went up to Beer-sheba. ²⁴ And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father; fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham's sake."²⁵ So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

²⁶ Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuz'zath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army. ²⁷ Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" ²⁸ They said, "We see plainly that the LORD is with you; so we say, let there be an oath between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, ²⁹ that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD."³⁰ So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. ³¹ In the morning they rose early and took oath with one another; and Isaac set them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. ³² That same day Isaac's servants

came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water."³³ He called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day.

³⁴ When Esau was forty years old, he took to wife Judith the daughter of Be-eri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite;³⁵ and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

27 When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son, and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am."² He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death."³ Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me,⁴ and prepare for me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat; that I may bless you before I die."

⁵ Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it,⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father speak to your brother Esau,⁷ 'Bring me game, and prepare for me savory food, that I may eat it, and bless you before the LORD before I die.'⁸ Now therefore, my son, obey my word as I command you.⁹ Go to the flock, and fetch me two good kids, that I may prepare from them savory food for your father, such as he loves;¹⁰ and you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies."¹¹ But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold,

^u That is *Contention*

^v That is *Enmity*

^w That is *Broad places or Room*

(v. 12) but also moved about to find pasturage and water for his flocks. **24:** *The God of Abraham*, the God of the patriarchs is not known in general or abstract terms but by his concrete, historical relations to particular persons (Ex.3.6). **28-30:** Compare 21.22-24. **32-33:** *Shibah*, another explanation of the name of Isaac's shrine, Beer-sheba (see 21.22-34 n.).

27.1-45: *Jacob cheats Esau out of the blessing.* Here begins a cycle of stories about Jacob, the founder of the sanctuary of Bethel. **3:** For Esau as a hunter, see 25.27-34, an episode to which Jacob makes no reference. **4:** Death-bed blessings were important in the life and literature of ancient peoples (48.10-20; 49.1-28; Dt. ch. 33; Jos. ch. 23). It was believed that the blessing, like the curse (v. 12), released a power which effectively determined the character and destiny of the recipient (Num. ch. 22-24). **5-29:** The elements of deceit and even outright lying (v. 20)

my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. ¹² Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him, and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing." ¹³ His mother said to him, "Upon me be your curse, my son; only obey my word, and go, fetch them to me." ¹⁴ So he went and took them and brought them to his mother; and his mother prepared savory food, such as his father loved. ¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son; ¹⁶ and the skins of the kids she put upon his hands and upon the smooth part of his neck; ¹⁷ and she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

¹⁸ So he went in to his father, and said, "My father"; and he said, "Here I am; who are you, my son?" ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your first-born. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that you may bless me." ²⁰ But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success." ²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." ²² So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." ²³ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. ²⁴ He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "I am." ²⁵ Then he said, "Bring it to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you." So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. ²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son."

²⁷ So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said,

"See, the smell of my son
is as the smell of a field which the
LORD has blessed!

²⁸ May God give you of the dew of
heaven,
and of the fatness of the earth,
and plenty of grain and wine.

²⁹ Let peoples serve you,
and nations bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may your mother's sons bow
down to you.

Cursed be every one who curses you,
and blessed be every one who
blesses you!"

³⁰ As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. ³¹ He also prepared savory food, and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." ³² His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am your son, your first-born, Esau." ³³ Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all^x before you came, and I have blessed him?—yes, and he shall be blessed." ³⁴ When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" ³⁵ But he said, "Your brother came with guile, and he has taken away your blessing." ³⁶ Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright; and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

^x Cn: Heb of all

mark this as a popular story; the sequel shows that later Jacob reaped the consequences of his action. ³⁴: To appreciate the pathos of the scene it must be remembered that the spoken blessing, like an arrow shot toward its goal, released a power which could not be retracted (see v. 3). ³⁶: *He has supplanted me*, see 25.26 n. ³⁹: This blessing inverts the meaning of the same

³⁷ Isaac answered Esau, "Behold, I have made him your lord, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" ³⁸ Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

³⁹ Then Isaac his father answered him:

"Behold, away from^y the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from^y the dew of heaven on high.

⁴⁰ By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you break loose you shall break his yoke from your neck."

⁴¹ Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob." ⁴² But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah; so she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself by planning to kill you. ⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran, ⁴⁴ and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away; ⁴⁵ until your brother's anger turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send, and fetch you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"

⁴⁶ Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one

of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?" ¹ Then **28** Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, "You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women. ² Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethu'el your mother's father; and take as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. ³ God Almighty^z bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. ⁴ May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your descendants with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings which God gave to Abraham!" ⁵ Thus Isaac sent Jacob away; and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, the son of Bethu'el the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

⁶ Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he charged him, "You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women," ⁷ and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-aram. ⁸ So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, ⁹ Esau went to Ish'mael and took to wife, besides the wives he had, Ma'halah the daughter of Ish'mael Abraham's son, the sister of Neba'ioth.

¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. ¹¹ And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to

^y Or of ^z Heb *El Shaddai*

words in v. 28, for the land of Edom was not fertile. **40:** In David's time Edom was subjugated (2 Sam.8.12-14) but it revolted under Solomon (1 Kg.11.14-22,25; compare 2 Kg.8.20-22).

27.46-28.22: Jacob's departure for Aram and his dream at Bethel. **46:** *Hittite women*, i.e. Canaanites (see 23.3 n. and 24.3 n.). **28.2:** *Paddan-aram*, see 11.31 n. **3:** *God Almighty*, see 17.1 n. **11:** Bethel was at this time unsettled. According to ancient belief, oracles could be received by sleeping in a holy place (1 Sam. ch. 3). **12:** Angels in a company are mentioned here and in 32.1-2 (compare 16.7; 21.17), suggesting the view of a retinue surrounding the heavenly King.

heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it^a and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants;¹⁴ and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves.^b"¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you."¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I did not know it."¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel;^c but the name of the city was Luz at the first.²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear,²¹ so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God,²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that

thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee."

29 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east.² As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and lo, three flocks of sheep lying beside it; for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large,³ and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place upon the mouth of the well.

⁴ Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran."⁵ He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him."⁶ He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!"⁷ He said, "Behold, it is still high day, it is not time for the animals to be gathered together; water the sheep, and go, pasture them."⁸ But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

⁹ While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them.¹⁰ Now when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone

a Or beside him

b Or be blessed

c That is The house of God

13-15: The Deity identifies himself as *the God of Abraham* and *the God of Isaac* (see 26.24 n.) and renews the promise (12.2-3,7). **17:** An explanation of the name of Beth-el (*house of God*). *The gate of heaven* suggests the ancient view that a sanctuary was a place where God came down to meet the people, like Babel or "gate of God" (11.1-9). **18:** The *pillar* was a sacred stone, often found at ancient sanctuaries (Jos.24.26). Anointing the stone made it holy, that is, set it apart for the Deity (v. 22). **21:** The personal relationship with the LORD indicated in the expression *my God*, is characteristic of patriarchal religion. The patriarch chooses God in response to a personal revelation. **22:** The story explains the origin of the northern sanctuary at Bethel which flourished from the time of Jeroboam I (1 Kg.12.26-29) to its destruction by Josiah (2 Kg.23.15).

29.1-31.55: *Jacob's success in Haran.* **1:** *The people of the east*, a general expression (11.2), is applied here to the Arameans. **8:** Local custom prevented use of the well until all rightful parties could be there to get their fair share; thus the stone covering was bigger than one man could

from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.
¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and wept aloud. ¹² And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father.

¹³ When Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things, ¹⁴ and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.

¹⁵ Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"
¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful and lovely. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." ¹⁹ Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." ²⁰ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." ²² So Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. ²³ But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. ²⁴ (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) ²⁵ And in the morning, behold, it was Leah; and Jacob said to Laban, "What

is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" ²⁶ Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born. ²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years." ²⁸ Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to wife. ²⁹ (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid.) ³⁰ So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

³¹ When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. ³² And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben;^d for she said, "Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; surely now my husband will love me." ³³ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard^e that I am hated, he has given me this son also"; and she called his name Simeon. ³⁴ Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be joined^f to me, because I have borne him three sons"; therefore his name was called Levi. ³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise^g the LORD"; therefore she called his name Judah; then she ceased bearing.

30 When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" ² Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and

^d That is *See*, a son ^e Heb *shama*
^f Heb *lawah* ^g Heb *hodah*

lift (vv. 2-3). **17:** Leah's eyes were *weak*, i.e. lacking luster. **18:** Jacob asks for Rachel as a reward for service (compare Jos.15.16-17; 1 Sam.17.25; 18.17) instead of paying the usual marriage price (Ex.22.16-17; Dt.22.29). **23-25:** The exchange could be made because the bride was brought veiled to the bridegroom (24.65). **27:** *The week* refers to the week of marriage festivity (Jg.14.12). **29.31-30.24:** Jacob's eleven sons (for Benjamin's birth, see 35.16-18). The fanciful name-explanations, based on Hebrew word-plays (see notes *d* to *n*), reflect the rivalry of the two wives for Jacob's affection. The story assumes the pattern of the twelve tribes of Israel, formed into a confederacy in the time of Joshua (Jos. ch. 24). **30.2-3:** See 16.2 n. **6:** *God has*

he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" ³ Then she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, that she may bear upon my knees, and even I may have children through her." ⁴ So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife; and Jacob went in to her. ⁵ And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son"; therefore she called his name Dan.^h ⁷ Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ Then Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestledⁱ with my sister, and have prevailed"; so she called his name Naph'tali.

⁹ When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰ Then Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹ And Leah said, "Good fortune!" so she called his name Gad.^j ¹² Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³ And Leah said, "Happy am I! For the women will call me happy"; so she called his name Asher.^k

¹⁴ In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Give me, I pray, some of your son's mandrakes." ¹⁵ But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" Rachel said, "Then he may lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." ¹⁶ When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him, and said, "You must come in to me; for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. ¹⁷ And God hearkened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Leah said, "God has given me my hire^l because I gave my maid

to my husband"; so she called his name Is'sachar. ¹⁹ And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰ Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good dowry; now my husband will honor^m me, because I have borne him six sons"; so she called his name Zeb'ulun. ²¹ Afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah. ²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her and opened her womb. ²³ She conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach"; ²⁴ and she called his name Joseph,ⁿ saying, "May the LORD add to me another son!"

²⁵ When Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country. ²⁶ Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know the service which I have given you." ²⁷ But Laban said to him, "If you will allow me to say so, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you; ²⁸ name your wages, and I will give it." ²⁹ Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you, and how your cattle have fared with me. ³⁰ For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly; and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when shall I provide for my own household also?" ³¹ He said, "What shall I give you?" Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything; if you will do this for me, I will again feed your flock and keep it: ³² let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages. ³³ So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats

^h That is He judged ⁱ Heb *niphtal*

^j That is Fortune ^k That is Happy

^l Heb *sakar* ^m Heb *zabal* ⁿ That is He adds

judged me, i.e. has gotten justice for me. **14**: In antiquity *mandrakes*, roots of a potato-like plant, were thought to have aphrodisiac properties which stimulated conception. **32-36**: Since striped

and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen.”³⁴ Laban said, “Good! Let it be as you have said.”³⁵ But that day Laban removed the he-goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and put them in charge of his sons;³⁶ and he set a distance of three days’ journey between himself and Jacob; and Jacob fed the rest of Laban’s flock.

37 Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the rods.³⁸ He set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the runnels, that is, the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink,³⁹ the flocks bred in front of the rods and so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted.⁴⁰ And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own droves apart, and did not put them with Laban’s flock.⁴¹ Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding Jacob laid the rods in the runnels before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the rods,⁴² but for the feebler of the flock he did not lay them there; so the feebler were Laban’s, and the stronger Jacob’s.⁴³ Thus the man grew exceedingly rich, and had large flocks, maidservants and menservants, and camels and asses.

31 Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, “Jacob has taken all that was our father’s; and from what was our father’s he has gained all this wealth.”² And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favor as before.³ Then the LORD said

to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you.”⁴ So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was,⁵ and said to them, “I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me.⁶ You know that I have served your father with all my strength;⁷ yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not permit him to harm me.⁸ If he said, ‘The spotted shall be your wages,’ then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, ‘The striped shall be your wages,’ then all the flock bore striped.⁹ Thus God has taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.¹⁰ In the mating season of the flock I lifted up my eyes, and saw in a dream that the he-goats which leaped upon the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.¹¹ Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Here I am!’¹² And he said, ‘Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that leap upon the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.¹³ I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth.’”¹⁴ Then Rachel and Leah answered him, “Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father’s house?¹⁵ Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has been using up the money given for us.¹⁶ All the property which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children; now then, whatever God has said to you, do.”

17 So Jacob arose, and set his sons and his wives on camels;¹⁸ and he drove away all his cattle, all his live-

or speckled coloration was unusual, Laban seemingly had nothing to lose. 37-40: Ancient cattle-breeders believed that the female, at the time of conception, was influenced by visual impressions which affect the color of the offspring. Jacob produced striped animals by putting striped sticks before the females’ eyes while they were breeding. 31.4-16: Jacob discusses the situation with his wives because legally they belong to their *father’s house* (v. 14), and are part

stock which he had gained, the cattle in his possession which he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. ¹⁹ Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father's household gods. ²⁰ And Jacob outwitted Laban the Aramean, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. ²¹ He fled with all that he had, and arose and crossed the Euphrates, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

²² When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, ²³ he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴ But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night, and said to him, "Take heed that you say not a word to Jacob, either good or bad."

²⁵ And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen encamped in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁶ And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have cheated me, and carried away my daughters like captives of the sword? ²⁷ Why did you flee secretly, and cheat me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? ²⁸ And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. ²⁹ It is in my power to do you harm; but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Take heed that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' ³⁰ And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" ³¹ Jacob answered Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. ³² Any one with whom

you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

³³ So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two maidservants, but he did not find them. And he went out of Leah's tent, and entered Rachel's. ³⁴ Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel's saddle, and sat upon them. Laban felt all about the tent, but did not find them. ³⁵ And she said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me." So he searched, but did not find the household gods.

³⁶ Then Jacob became angry, and upbraided Laban; Jacob said to Laban, "What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? ³⁷ Although you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. ³⁸ These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your she-goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. ³⁹ That which was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself; of my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. ⁴⁰ Thus I was; by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. ⁴¹ These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. ⁴² If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw

of the property (Ru.4.5,10). **19:** Possession of *the household gods* (1 Sam.19.13-17), according to ancient custom, insured a man's leadership of the family and his claim on the property. **35:** The narrator ridicules the idols upon which Rachel sat in her time of "uncleanness" (Lev.15.19-23). **42:** *The Fear of Isaac* (perhaps, the "Kinsman" of Isaac) is an old epithet for the God of the

my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night."

43 Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters, or to their children whom they have borne?"

44 Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I; and let it be a witness between you and me." 45 So Jacob took a stone, and set it up as a pillar. 46 And Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather stones," and they took stones, and made a heap; and they ate there by the heap. 47 Laban called it *Je'gar-sahadu'tha*:^o but Jacob called it *Galeed*.^p 48 Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today." Therefore he named it *Galeed*,^q and the pillar^r *Mizpah*,^s for he said, "The LORD watch between you and me, when we are absent one from the other. 50 If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, remember, God is witness between you and me."

51 Then Laban said to Jacob, "See this heap and the pillar, which I have set between you and me. 52 This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob swore by

the Fear of his father Isaac, 54 and Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and called his kinsmen to eat bread; and they ate bread and tarried all night on the mountain.

55 Early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them; then he departed and returned home.

32 Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him; 2 and when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's army!" So he called the name of that place *Mahana'im*.^t

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of *Se'ir*, the country of Edom, 4 instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; 5 and I have oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and maid-servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.'"

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him."

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies, 8 thinking, "If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the company which is left will escape."

^o In Aramaic *The heap of witness*

^p In Hebrew *The heap of witness*

^q Compare Sam: Heb lacks the pillar

^r That is *Watchpost*

^s Ch 32.1 in Heb

^t Here taken to mean *Two armies*

fathers, appropriated as a title for Israel's God. 43: Laban's argument presupposes the legality of a type of marriage in which the wife stays in her father's household and the husband must leave his family (Jg.14.2-3; 15.1). 44: The story reflects a boundary covenant between Arameans and Israelites, both of whom laid claim to the area in Transjordan (v. 52). 46: *They ate there*, a reference to the covenant meal (v. 54) at which, it was believed, the Deity was present. 47: The stone-heap is given two names (see notes ^o and ^p), one in Laban's language (Aramaic) and one in Jacob's (Hebrew). 49: The "Mizpah benediction" is a prayer that the Deity would oversee the treaty (since neither Jacob nor Laban could trust each other) and guarantee that both parties live up to the contract.

32.1-33.20: Jacob's reconciliation with Esau. Before re-entering the promised land, Jacob underwent a struggle which chastened his self-confidence and prepared him for a new relation with Esau. 1-2: The angels or heavenly host (see 28.12 n.) constituted *God's army* (Jos.5.13-15; 2 Kg.6.17). *Mahana'im*, here explained by a word-play, was important in later Israelite history (2 Sam.2.8-9; 17.24-29; 1 Kg.4.14). 3: *Seir*, the region of Edom in which apparently Esau had

9 And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who didst say to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good,'¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies.¹¹ Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and slay us all, the mothers with the children.¹² But thou didst say, 'I will do you good, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"

13 So he lodged there that night, and took from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau,¹⁴ two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,¹⁵ thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses.¹⁶ These he delivered into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between drove and drove."¹⁷ He instructed the foremost, "When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these before you?'¹⁸ then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my lord Esau; and moreover he is behind us.'"¹⁹ He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the

droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you meet him,²⁰ and you shall say, 'Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us.' For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me."²¹ So the present passed on before him; and he himself lodged that night in the camp.

22 The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had.²⁴ And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."²⁷ And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."²⁸ Then he said, "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel,"^u for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him.³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place Peni'el," saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."³¹ The sun rose upon him as he passed

^u That is *He who strives with God* or *God strives*
^v That is *The face of God*

already settled (36.6-8). **3-21:** Although uncertain how his brother felt toward him after twenty years, the resourceful Jacob believed that he could get the situation into hand, either by saving half of his camp (vv. 6-8) or by winning Esau over with impressive gifts (vv. 13-21). **25:** Owing to his Herculean strength (29.10; compare 28.18), Jacob was winning the contest until his opponent sprained Jacob's thigh. **26:** The divine being had to vanish before sunrise—a mark of the antiquity of the tradition. **27:** In antiquity it was believed that a person's self was concentrated in his name (compare v. 29). **28:** Jacob's new name signified a new self: no longer was he the Supplanter (25.26; 27.36) but *Israel* (35.10), which probably means "God rules." This name, which later designated the Tribal Confederacy (see 33.20 n.), is interpreted to mean "He who strives with God" (Hos.12.3-4). *And with men* refers to Jacob's strife with Esau and Laban. **29:** The divine being refuses lest Jacob, by possessing the name, gain power over him (compare Ex.3.13-14; Jg.13.17). **30:** Jacob had feared to see Esau's face (v. 20; 33.10), but instead he saw

Penu'el, limping because of his thigh.
³² Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew of the hip.

33 And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. ² And he put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. ³ He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

⁴ But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. ⁵ And when Esau raised his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." ⁶ Then the maids drew near, they and their children, and bowed down; ⁷ Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down; and last Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. ⁸ Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." ⁹ But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." ¹⁰ Jacob said, "No, I pray you, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand; for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God, with such favor have you received me."

¹¹ Accept, I pray you, my gift that is

brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.

¹² Then Esau said, "Let us journey on our way, and I will go before you."

¹³ But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the flocks and herds giving suck are a care to me; and if they are overdriven for one day, all the flocks will die. ¹⁴ Let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will lead on slowly, according to the pace of the cattle which are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Se'ir."

¹⁵ So Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the men who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." ¹⁶ So Esau returned that day on his way to Se'ir. ¹⁷ But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle; therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

¹⁸ And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram; and he camped before the city. ¹⁹ And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money^x the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. ²⁰ There he erected an altar and called it El-El'ohé-Israel.^y

34 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land; ² and when

^w That is Booths

^x Heb a hundred qesitah

^y That is God, the God of Israel

God face to face and was allowed to live (16.13; Ex.33.20). **32:** An explanation of the Israelite taboo against eating the corresponding muscle of an animal. **33.10:** *Like seeing the face of God*, who at Penuel also proved to be gracious (32.30). **18:** *Shechem*, see 12.6 n. **19:** *The Sons of Hamor* were the ruling clan of the city (Jg.9.28), of Hivite (perhaps Horite or Hurrian) extraction (see 36.20 n.). *The piece of land* later became the traditional burial place of Joseph (Jos.24.32). **20:** The worship of *El-Elohe-Israel* (see note y) apparently preceded the later establishment of a twelve-tribe confederacy of Israel at Shechem, when El (the Semitic word for "God") was succeeded by the LORD, the God of Israel (Jos. ch. 24).

34.1-24: *Shechem's violation of Dinah* and its consequences. **1:** Dinah is mentioned elsewhere

Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humbled her.³ And his soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob; he loved the maiden and spoke tenderly to her.⁴ So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this maiden for my wife."⁵ Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah; but his sons were with his cattle in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came.⁶ And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.⁷ The sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard of it; and the men were indignant and very angry, because he had wrought folly in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done.

⁸ But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; I pray you, give her to him in marriage.⁹ Make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves.¹⁰ You shall dwell with us; and the land shall be open to you; dwell and trade in it, and get property in it."

¹¹ Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give.¹² Ask of me ever so much as marriage present and gift, and I will give according as you say to me; only give me the maiden to be my wife."

¹³ The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled their sister Dinah.¹⁴ They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that

would be a disgrace to us.¹⁵ Only on this condition will we consent to you: that you will become as we are and every male of you be circumcised.¹⁶ Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to ourselves, and we will dwell with you and become one people.¹⁷ But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone."

¹⁸ Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor's son Shechem.¹⁹ And the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter. Now he was the most honored of all his family.²⁰ So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying,²¹ "These men are friendly with us; let them dwell in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them; let us take their daughters in marriage, and let us give them our daughters.²² Only on this condition will the men agree to dwell with us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised.²³ Will not their cattle, their property and all their beasts be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will dwell with us."²⁴ And all who went out of the gate of his city hearkened to Hamor and his son Shechem; and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

²⁵ On the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and came upon the city unawares, and killed all the males.²⁶ They slew Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword, and took

only in 30.21 and 46.15. *The women of the land*, i.e. Canaanite women. 2: Here *Shechem* is the name of a person (33.19). The story portrays, in the guise of individuals, relations between the Canaanite city and early Hebrew tribes. *The sons of Hamor*, see 33.19 n. 7: *Wrought folly in Israel* is an old expression for a crime affecting the whole tribal community of Israel (Dt.22.21; Jos.7.15; Jg.19.23-24; 20.6,10). 12: *Marriage present*, Ex.22.16-17; Dt.22.29. 14-15: Circumcision, see 17.9-14 n. 19: The fact that Shechem was most honored of all his family and the prince of the land (v. 2) shows the ascendancy of this Canaanite city in the pre-Israelite period. 22-23: *One people*, i.e. a kindred-group in which the Shechemites would have the leadership. 25-26:

Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went away. ²⁷ And the sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled; ²⁸ they took their flocks and their herds, their asses, and whatever was in the city and in the field; ²⁹ all their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses, they captured and made their prey. ³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Per'izzites; my numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household." ³¹ But they said, "Should he treat our sister as a harlot?"

35 God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." ² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments; ³ then let us arise and go up to Bethel, that I may make there an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." ⁴ So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem.

⁵ And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were

round about them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. ⁶ And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, ⁷ and there he built an altar, and called the place El-bethel,^z because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother. ⁸ And Deb'orah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel; so the name of it was called Al'lon-bacuth.^a

⁹ God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰ And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So his name was called Israel. ¹¹ And God said to him, "I am God Almighty:^b be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you. ¹² The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you." ¹³ Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. ¹⁴ And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it. ¹⁵ So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.

¹⁶ Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when they were still some

^z That is *God of Bethel*

^a That is *Oak of weeping*

^b Heb *El Shaddai*

Simeon and Levi took the initiative because they were full brothers of Dinah. **30:** The violent action, which threatened the good relations of Jacob's family with the Canaanites, reflects events which forced Simeon and Levi out of the area and led to their decline in power (49.5-7).

35.1-29: Jacob's journey from Shechem to Mamre. **1:** *Bethel*, 28.19-22. Verses 1-4 may reflect the custom of making a pilgrimage to the Bethel sanctuary (compare Jg.20.26-27). **2:** The worshippers had to undergo ceremonial purification, which involved changing garments and ablutions (Ex.19.10; Jos.7.13), and to renounce *foreign gods* (Jos.24.14-18,23), including the household gods (31.19). **4:** The earrings and other magical amulets belonged to foreign idolatry (Ex.32.2-3; Jg.8.24). *The oak*, i.e. of Moreh (12.6). **5:** *A terror from God*, an expression derived from ancient holy war (Ex.23.27; Jos.10.10), was a mysterious panic that paralyzed the enemy. **6-7:** 28.18-22. **9-13:** Another account of Jacob's receiving a new name (compare 32.24-30) and God's promise to him (28.13-15). **11:** *God Almighty*, see 17.1 n. **14-15:** A tradition parallel to 28.18-22. **16:** *Ephrath*, see v. 19 n. **18:** Dying in child-birth, Rachel gave an ominous name (see

distance from Ephrath, Rachel trav-
ailed, and she had hard labor. ¹⁷ And
when she was in her hard labor, the
midwife said to her, "Fear not; for
now you will have another son." ¹⁸ And
as her soul was departing (for she
died), she called his name Ben-o'ni;^c
but his father called his name
Benjamin.^d ¹⁹ So Rachel died, and
she was buried on the way to Ephrath
(that is, Bethlehem), ²⁰ and Jacob set
up a pillar upon her grave; it is the
pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there
to this day. ²¹ Israel journeyed on,
and pitched his tent beyond the tower
of Eder.

²² While Israel dwelt in that land
Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his
father's concubine; and Israel heard
of it.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.
²³ The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's
first-born), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Is'-
sachar, and Zeb'ulun. ²⁴ The sons of
Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵ The
sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and
Naph'tali. ²⁶ The sons of Zilpah,
Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These
were the sons of Jacob who were born
to him in Paddan-aram.

²⁷ And Jacob came to his father
Isaac at Mamre, or Kir'iath-ar'ba (that
is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac
had sojourned. ²⁸ Now the days of
Isaac were a hundred and eighty years.
²⁹ And Isaac breathed his last; and
he died and was gathered to his people,
old and full of days; and his sons Esau
and Jacob buried him.

36 These are the descendants of
Esau (that is, Edom). ² Esau
took his wives from the Canaanites:
Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite,

Oholiba'mah the daughter of Anah
the son^e of Zib'eon the Hivite, ³ and
Bas'emath, Ish'mael's daughter, the
sister of Neba'ioth. ⁴ And Adah bore
to Esau, El'iphaz; Bas'emath bore
Reu'el; ⁵ and Oholiba'mah bore Je'-
ush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the
sons of Esau who were born to him
in the land of Canaan.

⁶ Then Esau took his wives, his
sons, his daughters, and all the mem-
bers of his household, his cattle, all
his beasts, and all his property which
he had acquired in the land of Canaan;
and he went into a land away from his
brother Jacob. ⁷ For their possessions
were too great for them to dwell to-
gether; the land of their sojournings
could not support them because of
their cattle. ⁸ So Esau dwelt in the hill
country of Se'ir; Esau is Edom.

⁹ These are the descendants of
Esau the father of the E'domites in
the hill country of Se'ir. ¹⁰ These are
the names of Esau's sons: El'iphaz the
son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reu'el
the son of Bas'emath the wife of Esau.
¹¹ The sons of El'iphaz were Teman,
Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.
¹² (Timna was a concubine of El'-
iphaz, Esau's son; she bore Am'alek to
El'iphaz.) These are the sons of
Adah, Esau's wife. ¹³ These are the
sons of Reu'el: Nahath, Zerah, Sham-
mah, and Mizzah. These are the sons
of Bas'emath, Esau's wife. ¹⁴ These
are the sons of Oholiba'mah the daugh-
ter of Anah the son^f of Zib'eon, Esau's
wife: she bore to Esau Je'ush, Jalam,
and Korah.

^c That is Son of my sorrow

^d That is Son of the right hand or Son of the South

^e Sam Gk Syr: Heb daughter

^f Gk Syr: Heb daughter

note c) to the child (see 1 Sam.4.21), although Jacob changed the name to a propitious one.
Benjamin (see note d) refers either to the right hand as a symbol of power and fortune or to the
tribe's position south of Ephraim. 19: Here and in 48.7 (Ru.4.11; Mic.5.2) Ephrath is identified
with Bethlehem. Another tradition located Rachel's grave in Benjaminite territory north of
Jerusalem (1 Sam.10.2; Jer.31.15). 21-22: This fragmentary account apparently told of an
incident which resulted in Reuben's loss of prestige as the first-born son (49.3-4). 21: From this
point on the name *Israel* is often used to refer to Jacob (32.28).

36.1-43: Edomite lists. Some of this material (vv. 1-8,9-14,15-19,40-43) was apparently
drawn from the book of generations (5.1). 1: *Esau* (*Edom*), 25.21-28. 2-3: Esau's wives, see
26.34; 28.8. 8: *Seir*, or Edom (see 25.25 n.; 27.39-40).

15 These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of El'iphaz the first-born of Esau: the chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶ Korah, Gatam, and Am'alek; these are the chiefs of El'iphaz in the land of Edom; they are the sons of Adah. ¹⁷ These are the sons of Reu'el, Esau's son: the chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah; these are the chiefs of Reu'el in the land of Edom; they are the sons of Bas'emath, Esau's wife. ¹⁸ These are the sons of Oholiba'mah, Esau's wife: the chiefs Je'ush, Jalam, and Korah; these are the chiefs born of Oholiba'mah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. ¹⁹ These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their chiefs.

20 These are the sons of Se'ir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zib'eon, Anah, ²¹ Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Se'ir in the land of Edom. ²² The sons of Lotan were Hori and Heman; and Lotan's sister was Timna. ²³ These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Man'ahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. ²⁴ These are the sons of Zib'eon: A'iah and Anah; he is the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he pastured the asses of Zib'eon his father. ²⁵ These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholiba'mah the daughter of Anah. ²⁶ These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. ²⁷ These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Za'avan, and Akan. ²⁸ These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. ²⁹ These are the chiefs of the Horites: the chiefs Lotan, Shobal, Zib'eon, Anah, ³⁰ Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the chiefs of the Horites, according to their clans in the land of Se'ir.

31 These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites. ³² Bela the son of Be'or reigned in Edom, the name of his city being Din'habah. ³³ Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. ³⁴ Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Te'manites reigned in his stead. ³⁵ Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Mid'ian in the country of Moab, reigned in his stead, the name of his city being Avith. ³⁶ Hadad died, and Samlah of Masre'kah reigned in his stead. ³⁷ Samlah died, and Shaul of Reho'both on the Euphra'tes reigned in his stead. ³⁸ Shaul died, and Ba'al-ha'nan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. ³⁹ Ba'al-ha'nan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead, the name of his city being Pau; his wife's name was Mehet'abel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Me'zahab.

40 These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their dwelling places, by their names: the chiefs Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ⁴¹ Oholiba'mah, Elah, Pinon, ⁴² Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ⁴³ Mag'diel, and Iram; these are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of Edom), according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession.

37 Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. ² This is the history of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father. ³ Now Israel

20: *Horite* refers to the Hurrians, a non-Semitic people who migrated into Mesopotamia about 2000 B.C. and later formed an important element of the Canaanite population. **31-39:** Edom became a monarchy long (perhaps 150 years) before Israel did (Num. 20.14), a circumstance reflected in the tradition that Esau was the older brother although Jacob gained the ascendancy.

37.1-36: *Joseph is sold into slavery.* The narratives about Joseph, found in chs. 37; 39-47; and 50, constitute a single literary form or short story. **2:** The Joseph story is regarded as part of the history of Jacob, who died at the end of the saga (49.33). *The sons of Bilhah and Zilpah*, 30.1-13.

loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. ⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they only hated him the more. ⁶ He said to them, "Hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷ behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves gathered round it, and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him yet more for his dreams and for his words. ⁹ Then he dreamed another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream; and behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ¹⁰ But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" ¹¹ And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

¹² Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. ¹³ And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." ¹⁴ So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers, and

with the flock; and bring me word again." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵ And a man found him wandering in the fields; and the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" ¹⁶ "I am seeking my brothers," he said, "tell me, I pray you, where they are pasturing the flock." ¹⁷ And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸ They saw him afar off, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰ Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." ²¹ But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." ²² And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. ²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; ²⁴ and they took him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty, there was no water in it.

²⁵ Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?" ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon

3: *A long robe with sleeves* was a luxurious robe (2 Sam.13.18–19), different from the ordinary sleeveless tunic which reached to the knees. **5–11:** Joseph's two dreams were prophetic of his future elevation in Egypt (42.6; 50.18). **9:** *Eleven stars*, apparently the eleven constellations which ancients pictured in animal form. **12:** The previous scene is laid in Hebron (35.27), several days' journey from Jacob's pasture land *near Shechem* (33.18–20). **21:** *Reuben* may be a scribal mistake for Judah, Joseph's advocate in v. 26. **20:** *The pits* were open cisterns for storing rain water (Jer.38.6). **22:** The advice of Reuben and Judah reflects the ancient belief that blood cannot be "concealed" (v. 26) but cries out for requital (see 4.10–11 n.). **25–28:** Two traditions have been combined: according to one, Joseph was sold to *Ishmaelites*; according to the other,

him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers heeded him. ²⁸ Then Mid'ianite traders passed by; and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ish'maelites for twenty shekels of silver; and they took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he rent his clothes ³⁰ and returned to his brothers, and said, "The lad is gone; and I, where shall I go?" ³¹ Then they took Joseph's robe, and killed a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood; ³² and they sent the long robe with sleeves and brought it to their father, and said, "This we have found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not." ³³ And he recognized it, and said, "It is my son's robe; a wild beast has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." ³⁴ Then Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him. ³⁶ Meanwhile the Mid'-ianites had sold him in Egypt to Pot'-i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

38 It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

² There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; he married her and went in to her, ³ and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. ⁴ Again she conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. ⁵ Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. She^g was in Chezib when she bore him. ⁶ And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. ⁸ Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." ⁹ But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife he spilled the semen on the ground, lest he should give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰ And what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD, and he slew him also. ¹¹ Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up"—for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

¹² In course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; and when Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

^g GK: Heb He

he was kidnapped by *Midianite traders* (v. 36). Dothan (a few miles north of Shechem), where Joseph found his brothers (v. 17), lay on the trade route from Syria to Egypt. **35:** *Sheol*, the underworld to which, it was believed, a man's shade went at death (2 Sam.12.23; Ps.115.17). Since this after-life was a shadowy existence, Jacob's going to his son there was not a comforting expectation. **36:** *Potiphar* is a form of Potiphra, the name of the Egyptian priest, of 41.45 and 46.20. It has been thought they may be the same person, one source designating him as captain of the guard, and another as a priest.

38.1-30: Judah and Tamar. This chapter, an interlude in the Joseph story, deals with a woman's part in the LORD's promise that Abraham will have a great posterity. **1:** *Adullamite*, a resident of Adullam near Bethlehem. **2:** The marriage with Shuah's daughter reflects territorial expansion of the tribe of Judah and the consequent intermarriage with Canaanites. **7:** The early and childless death of Er is attributed to a divine act, almost demonic in character. **8:** According to the ancient widespread custom of levirate marriage (Dt.25.5-10; compare Ru.4.1-8), *the duty of a brother-in-law* was to raise up a male descendant for his deceased brother and thus perpetuate his name and inheritance. **11:** Judah apparently feared that the death of his two sons resulted from Tamar's sinister power. A widow was supposed to return to her *father's house*

¹³ And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," ¹⁴ she put off her widow's garments, and put on a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶ He went over to her at the road side, and said, "Come, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" ¹⁷ He answered, "I will send you a kid from the flock." And she said, "Will you give me a pledge, till you send it?" ¹⁸ He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She replied, "Your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹ Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰ When Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he could not find her. ²¹ And he asked the men of the place, "Where is the harlot^h who was at Enaim by the way-side?" And they said, "No harlot^h has been here." ²² So he returned to Judah, and said, "I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, 'No harlot^h has been here.'" ²³ And Judah replied, "Let her keep the things as her own, lest we be laughed

at; you see, I sent this kid, and you could not find her."

²⁴ About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; and moreover she is with child by harlotry." And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned." ²⁵ As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Mark, I pray you, whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." ²⁶ Then Judah acknowledged them and said, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not lie with her again.

²⁷ When the time of her delivery came, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸ And when she was in labor, one put out a hand; and the midwife took and bound on his hand a scarlet thread, saying, "This came out first." ²⁹ But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out; and she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez.ⁱ ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zerah.

39 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Pot'i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ish'maelites who had brought him down there. ² The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian, ³ and his master

h Or cult prostitute *i* That is A breach

(Ru.1.8-9; Lev.22.13). **14:** Suspecting that Judah's promise (v. 11) was insincere, Tamar took steps to make him perform the levirate duty. **15:** Tamar was taken to be a cult prostitute (see note *h* on v. 21), a devotee of the mother-goddess Ishtar. Prostitution was connected with the worship of the nature gods of fertility (Dt.23.18; 1 Kg.14.24; 2 Kg.23.7; Hos.4.13; Am.2.7). **18:** The signet was a ring or cylinder, often suspended around the neck by a cord and used to stamp one's "signature." **24:** In Israel stoning was the usual punishment for a harlot (Dt.22.23-24; compare Jn.8.5), although burning was prescribed for exceptional cases (Lev.21.9). **26:** Tamar is singled out for approval, for judged by the levirate obligation, she was *more righteous* (see 6.9 n.) than Judah. **27-30:** The birth of the twins (25.21-26) portrays the rivalry of Perez and Zerah, two clans of Judah (Num.26.19-22) who were partially Canaanite. Perez, the first-born, was an ancestor of David (Ru.4.18-22).

39.1-23: Joseph's success, temptation, and imprisonment. 1: This story continues from ch. 37,

saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵ From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in house and field. ⁶ So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. ⁷ And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand; ⁹ he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her. ¹¹ But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, ¹² she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house. ¹³ And when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, ¹⁴ she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me to lie

with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; ¹⁵ and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled and got out of the house." ¹⁶ Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷ and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me; ¹⁸ but as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled out of the house."

¹⁹ When his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. ²⁰ And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. ²¹ But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²² And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison; and whatever was done there, he was the doer of it; ²³ the keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

40 Some time after this, the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. ² And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker, ³ and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he waited on them; and they continued for some time in custody. ⁵ And

and follows the tradition about the Ishmaelites (37.25). **5:** 30.27-30. **6:** For ritual reasons Potiphar took charge of his own food (43.32). **7-20:** The Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers" also tells how a man rejected the advances of his brother's wife, who then laid false accusations against him and almost brought about his death at the hands of his brother. **21:** Strangely Joseph, a slave, was not executed for alleged adultery, for *the LORD was with him*, not only in success (v. 2) but also in adversity.

40.1-23: Joseph, the interpreter of dreams. **5:** Since, according to ancient belief, dreams were

one night they both dreamed—the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own meaning. ⁶ When Joseph came to them in the morning and saw them, they were troubled. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" ⁸ They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, I pray you."

⁹ So the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, ¹⁰ and on the vine there were three branches; as soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." ¹² Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days; ¹³ within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his butler. ¹⁴ But remember me, when it is well with you, and do me the kindness, I pray you, to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. ¹⁵ For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream:

there were three cake baskets on my head, ¹⁷ and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head." ¹⁸ And Joseph answered, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; ¹⁹ within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat the flesh from you."

²⁰ On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief butler and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹ He restored the chief butler to his butlership, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; ²² but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³ Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

41 After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, ² and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows sleek and fat, and they fed in the reed grass. ³ And behold, seven other cows, gaunt and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴ And the gaunt and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke. ⁵ And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. ⁶ And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. ⁷ And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. ⁸ So in the morning his spirit

a channel of divine communication (1 Sam.28.6), the wise interpreter of dreams could discern the course of the future (37.5-10; Dan.2.26-28). **6-8:** Professional interpreters of dreams were unnecessary (41.16), for *interpretations belong to God* who knows and controls the events of the future. **13:** *Lift up your head*, i.e. graciously free you from prison (2 Kg.25.27). The same phrase is humorously applied to the baker's fate in v. 19. **15:** *Stolen*, 37.28.

41.1-57: Joseph's elevation as a result of his successful interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. **1-2:** Egypt's fertility, symbolized by the sacred cows, was dependent upon the Nile. **6:** *The east wind*, the sirocco, a burning wind from the desert which withers vegetation (Hos.13.15). **8:** The narrator intends to demonstrate the superiority of Israel's God over heathen magic and wisdom

was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men; and Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was none who could interpret it/ to Pharaoh.

9 Then the chief butler said to Pharaoh, "I remember my faults today. ¹⁰ When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, ¹¹ we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own meaning. ¹² A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard; and when we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. ¹³ And as he interpreted to us, so it came to pass; I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged."

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it; and I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." ¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile; ¹⁸ and seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass; ¹⁹ and seven other cows came up after them, poor and very gaunt and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰ And the thin and gaunt cows ate up the first seven fat cows, ²¹ but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as gaunt as at the beginning. Then I awoke. ²² I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good;

²³ and seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, ²⁴ and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dream of Pharaoh is one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one. ²⁷ The seven lean and gaunt cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is as I told Pharaoh, God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, ³⁰ but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land, ³¹ and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of that famine which will follow, for it will be very grievous. ³² And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. ³³ Now therefore let Pharaoh select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵ And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine which are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

37 This proposal seemed good to

J Gk: Heb them

(Ex.8.18-19; 9.11; Dan.2.2-19; 5.8,15-28). **16:** Joseph denies having any occult art and ascribes his skill solely to God (see 40.6-8 n.). **32:** Two dreams with the same meaning (v. 25) show that the event is *fixed* or predestined by God. Note that this sense of God's overruling sovereignty does not evoke a fatalistic resignation but a practical plan of action (vv. 33-36). **38:** *The Spirit*

Pharaoh and to all his servants.³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a man as this, in whom is the Spirit of God?"³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are;⁴⁰ you shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only as regards the throne will I be greater than you."⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;⁴³ and he made him to ride in his second chariot; and they cried before him, "Bow the knee!"^k Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.⁴⁴ Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaph'enath-pane'ah; and he gave him in marriage As'enath, the daughter of Poti'phera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went through all the land of Egypt.⁴⁷ During the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth abundantly,⁴⁸ and he gathered up all the food of the seven years when there was plenty^l in the land of Egypt, and stored up food in the cities; he stored up in every city the food from the fields around it.⁴⁹ And Joseph stored up grain in great

abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

⁵⁰ Before the year of famine came, Joseph had two sons, whom As'enath, the daughter of Poti'phera priest of On, bore to him.⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the first-born Manas'seh.^m "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house."⁵² The name of the second he called E'phraim,ⁿ "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

⁵³ The seven years of plenty that prevailed in the land of Egypt came to an end;⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.⁵⁵ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do."⁵⁶ So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses,^o and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.⁵⁷ Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?"² And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live, and not die."³ So ten

^k *Abrek*, probably an Egyptian word similar in sound to the Hebrew word meaning to kneel

^l Sam Gk: Heb *which were*

^m That is *Making to forget*

ⁿ From a Hebrew word meaning to be fruitful

^o Gk Vg Compare Syr: Heb *all that was in them*

of God, the source of extraordinary powers (Ex.31.3; Num.27.18; Dan.5.11,14). **39-41:** Joseph was made prime minister, second only to Pharaoh in authority. During the period of Hyksos ascendancy in Egypt (about 1720-1550 B.C.), when the land was under pro-Semitic rule, conditions were favorable for a Hebrew to rise to such a position of leadership. **42:** *The signet ring* (see 38.18 n.) empowered Joseph to act as Pharaoh's representative (compare Est.3.10; 8.2). **45:** The installation rites, typically Egyptian, culminated with the bestowal of an Egyptian name. Joseph's adoption into the Egyptian court is further indicated by his marriage into the leading priesthood of On or Heliopolis. *Potiphera*, see 37.36 n. **46:** Joseph's slavery and imprisonment lasted thirteen years (37.2-3).

42.1-38: Joseph's brothers journey to Egypt during the famine. **5:** See 12.10 n. **6:** *Bowed them-*

of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. ⁴ But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might befall him. ⁵ Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 Now Joseph was governor over the land; he it was who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Joseph saw his brothers, and knew them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." ⁸ Thus Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not know him. ⁹ And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed of them; and he said to them, "You are spies, you have come to see the weakness of the land." ¹⁰ They said to him, "No, my lord, but to buy food have your servants come. ¹¹ We are all sons of one man, we are honest men, your servants are not spies." ¹² He said to them, "No, it is the weakness of the land that you have come to see." ¹³ And they said, "We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more." ¹⁴ But Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies. ¹⁵ By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶ Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain in prison, that your words may be tested, whether

there is truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies." ¹⁷ And he put them all together in prison for three days.

18 On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹ if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined in your prison, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, ²⁰ and bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so. ²¹ Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us and we would not listen; therefore is this distress come upon us." ²² And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the lad? But you would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." ²³ They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. ²⁴ Then he turned away from them and wept; and he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. ²⁵ And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.

26 Then they loaded their asses with their grain, and departed. ²⁷ And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack; ²⁸ and he said to his brothers, "My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!" At this their hearts failed them, and they

selves before him, thereby unwittingly fulfilling the prediction of Joseph's dream (v. 9; see 37.5-11 n.). **9-14:** The charge of espionage was natural, for Egypt's frontier, facing Canaan, was vulnerable to attack (Ex.1.10). **15-17:** The "testing" involved not only the verification of the brothers' words but also a discipline of suffering which would purge the evil of their hearts (compare v. 21). *By the life of Pharaoh*, an oath in the name of Pharaoh, who was revered as a god in Egypt. **21-22:** Once again the brothers have to announce to their father that misfortune has befallen one of his sons (compare ch. 37). Though they do not yet recognize Joseph, the similarity of the two situations evokes a feeling of guilt for their former behavior. **28:** They sense that divine retribution is behind the mysterious events. **38:** *Sheol*, see 37.35 n.

turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

29 When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had befallen them, saying, ³⁰ "The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us, and took us to be spies of the land. ³¹ But we said to him, 'We are honest men, we are not spies; ³² we are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.' ³³ Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, 'By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way. ³⁴ Bring your youngest brother to me; then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver to you your brother, and you shall trade in the land.' "

35 As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed. ³⁶ And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin; all this has come upon me." ³⁷ Then Reuben said to his father, "Slay my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." ³⁸ But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he only is left. If harm should befall him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

43 Now the famine was severe in the land. ² And when they had eaten the grain which they had brought from Egypt, their father said

to them, "Go again, buy us a little food." ³ But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.' ⁴ If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food; ⁵ but if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.' " ⁶ Israel said, "Why did you treat me so ill as to tell the man that you had another brother?" ⁷ They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions; could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'" ⁸ And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. ⁹ I will be surety for him; of my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame for ever; ¹⁰ for if we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice."

11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man a present, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. ¹² Take double the money with you; carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³ Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man; ¹⁴ may God Almighty^p grant you mercy before the man, that he may send back your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." ¹⁵ So the men took the present, and they took double

p Heb *El Shaddai*

43.1-34: The second journey to Egypt. **1-2:** Simeon, left as a hostage in Egypt (vv. 14,23), is apparently forgotten, for the brothers return only when more grain is needed. **3-7:** 42.29-34. **13:** *God Almighty*, see 17.1 n.

the money with them, and Benjamin; and they arose and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon." 17 The man did as Joseph bade him, and brought the men to Joseph's house. 18 And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, to make slaves of us and seize our asses." 19 So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house, and spoke with him at the door of the house, 20 and said, "Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food; 21 and when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was every man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it again with us, 22 and we have brought other money down in our hand to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

23 He replied, "Rest assured, do not be afraid; your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your sacks for you; I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. 24 And when the man had brought the men into Joseph's house, and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their asses provender, 25 they made ready the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which they had with them, and bowed down to him to the ground.

27 And he inquired about their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" 28 They said, "Your servant our father is well, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and made obeisance. 29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" 30 Then Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. 31 Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, "Let food be served." 32 They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. 33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked at one another in amazement. 34 Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

44 Then he commanded the steward of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, 2 and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph told him. 3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their asses. 4 When they had gone but a short distance from the city, Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you

23: The steward's words again stress the fundamental motif of the story: the working of divine providence. 29-30: Joseph's heart *yearned* for Benjamin, his only full brother through Rachel. 32: Laws of ritual purity required that Egyptians eat apart from foreigners.

44.1-34: Joseph puts his brothers to a final test. 1-2: The reference to the money harks back to the same motif in 42.25-28; here the real object of interest is Joseph's cup (v. 5). 5: The

stolen my silver cup?⁹ ⁵ Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he divines? You have done wrong in so doing.”

6 When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. ⁷ They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! ⁸ Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan; how then should we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? ⁹ With whomever of your servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.” ¹⁰ He said, “Let it be as you say: he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be blameless.” ¹¹ Then every man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and every man opened his sack. ¹² And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³ Then they rent their clothes, and every man loaded his ass, and they returned to the city.

14 When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, he was still there; and they fell before him to the ground. ¹⁵ Joseph said to them, “What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed divine?” ¹⁶ And Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found.”

¹⁷ But he said, “Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose

hand the cup was found shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

18 Then Judah went up to him and said, “O my lord, let your servant, I pray you, speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant; for you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father, or a brother?’ ²⁰ And we said to my lord, ‘We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children; and his father loves him.’ ²¹ Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes upon him.’ ²² We said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.’ ²³ Then you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.’ ²⁴ When we went back to your servant my father we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵ And when our father said, ‘Go again, buy us a little food,’ ²⁶ we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.’ ²⁷ Then your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons; ²⁸ one left me, and I said, Surely he has been torn to pieces; and I have never seen him since. ²⁹ If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to Sheol.’ ³⁰ Now therefore, when

q Gk Compare Vg: Heb lacks *Why have you stolen my silver cup?*

cup was a sacred vessel used for divination, i.e. for magical prediction by observing the effects created when objects were thrown into the water contained therein. 15: Having been initiated into Egyptian wisdom, Joseph can claim to practice divination, by which means the theft was discovered. 16: Since the brothers acknowledge their collective guilt, Judah’s words may refer not only to the theft but to their treatment of Joseph in his youth. 17: Joseph tests his brothers to see whether, as in his case once, they will let Benjamin go into slavery and return to their father to justify the loss of another of his sons. 18–34: Judah’s speech, one of the finest prose pieces from Israel’s early tradition, summarizes and epitomizes the whole sequence of events. 20: The tragedy of Joseph’s supposed death heightens the pathos; for of Jacob’s two sons by Rachel, only Benjamin is left and Jacob’s life is bound up in the lad’s life (v. 30).

I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the lad's life, ³¹ when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die; and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. ³² For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame in the sight of my father all my life.' ³³ Now therefore, let your servant, I pray you, remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord; and let the lad go back with his brothers. ³⁴ For how can I go back to my father if the lad is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would come upon my father."

45 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him; and he cried, "Make every one go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing

nor harvest. ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry; ¹⁰ you shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have; ¹¹ and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty.' ¹² And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. ¹³ You must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Make haste and bring my father down here." ¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶ When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. ¹⁷ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan; ¹⁸ and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall

45.1-28: Joseph makes himself known to his brothers. 7-8: This passage sets forth the central theme of the Joseph story: events were directed by God's hand, not by human purposes. God graciously contrives to bring good out of evil; for the brothers, in selling Joseph into slavery, had unwittingly carried out God's will. **7:** Through Joseph God acted to *preserve life* (v. 5; 50.20), not only the life of famine-stricken Egyptians but also that of a *remnant*, that is, the family which is the bearer of the promise given to Abraham (12.2-3; 50.24). **8:** *A father to Pharaoh*, a title of the chief minister (Is.22.21; compare 1 Macc.11.32). **10:** *The land of Goshen*, the present Wadi Tumilat, a narrow strip of grazing land in the Delta. Since the settlers would be *near* Joseph, the assumption is that Pharaoh's capital was in the Delta region; this was the case during the Hyksos period (see 41.39-41 n.). **16-20:** According to Egyptian sources, it was not unusual for Pharaoh to permit Asiatics to settle in his country in time of famine.

eat the fat of the land.' ¹⁹ Command them' also, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰ Give no thought to your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "

21 The sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. ²² To each and all of them he gave festal garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five festal garments. ²³ To his father he sent as follows: ten asses loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. ²⁴ Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way." ²⁵ So they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. ²⁶ And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart fainted, for he did not believe them. ²⁷ But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived; ²⁸ and Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive; I will go and see him before I die."

46 So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ² And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here am I." ³ Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father;

do not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. ⁴ I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." ⁵ Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶ They also took their cattle and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, ⁷ his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.

⁸ Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons. Reuben, Jacob's first-born, ⁹ and the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰ The sons of Simeon: Jemu'-el, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman. ¹¹ The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹² The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. ¹³ The sons of Is'sachar: Tola, Puvah, Iob, and Shimron. ¹⁴ The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, and Jah'leel ¹⁵ (these are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, together with his daughter Dinah; altogether his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three). ¹⁶ The sons of Gad: Ziph'ion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Aro'di, and Aro'li. ¹⁷ The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah,

r Compare Gk Vg: Heb you are commanded

46.1-27: Jacob's migration to Egypt. 1: From Hebron (37.14) Jacob went first to Beer-sheba, the shrine associated with Isaac (26.23-25; 28.10). *The God of your father*, see 26.24 n. 2-4: The descent into Egypt, which was to have decisive significance for Israel's history, was prompted not merely by Jacob's desire to see his long-lost son (45.28) but by divine revelation in *visions of the night*. 3: As on a previous occasion (28.13-15), before Jacob left the land of the promise to go to a foreign land God renewed his promise to make him a *great nation* (12.2; 18.18) in Egypt (Ex.1.7). 4: Only Jacob's corpse was returned from Egypt (50.4-14). However, according to Hebraic corporate thinking, the words *bring you up again* were fulfilled, for the father lived on in the person of his sons. 6-27: This section, from a separate priestly tradition, contains a list of Jacob's descendants, based on the traditional number seventy (v. 27; Ex.1.5; Dt.10.22). Most

Ishvi, Beri'ah, with Serah their sister. And the sons of Beri'ah: Heber and Mal'chi-el ¹⁸ (these are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob—sixteen persons). ¹⁹ The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰ And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manas'seh and E'phraim, whom As'enath, the daughter of Poti'phera the priest of On, bore to him. ²¹ And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Na'aman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard ²² (these are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob—fourteen persons in all). ²³ The sons of Dan: Hushim. ²⁴ The sons of Naph'tali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem ²⁵ (these are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and these she bore to Jacob—seven persons in all). ²⁶ All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own offspring, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all; ²⁷ and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were seventy.

²⁸ He sent Judah before him to Joseph, to appear^s before him in Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. ²⁹ Then Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰ Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive." ³¹ Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him,

'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me; ³² and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.' ³³ When Pharaoh calls you, and says, 'What is your occupation?' ³⁴ you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

47 So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, "My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; they are now in the land of Goshen." ² And from among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. ³ Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were." ⁴ They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land; for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan; and now, we pray you, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." ⁵ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶ The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen; and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my cattle."

⁷ Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸ And

s Sam Syr Compare Gk Vg: Heb to show the way

of the names of the ancestral clan leaders are found in the priestly list in Num. ch. 26. **27: Seventy**, the author includes Joseph and his two sons born in Egypt, as well as Jacob himself.

46.28-47.12: Jacob and his sons settle in Egypt. **28:** Judah is sent ahead because he is the chief spokesman (37.26; 43.3-10; 44.18-34). *Goshen*, see 45.10 n. **31-34:** Desiring to have his relatives near him in the Delta, Joseph advised his brothers to testify that they were shepherds; since this occupation was abominable to Egyptians in the interior (v. 34), Pharaoh would see the wisdom of setting them apart in the land of Goshen. **47.1-6:** Egyptian sources testify that the pharaohs possessed large herds and gave much attention to cattle-breeding. **7-12:** According to this

Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?"⁹ And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning."¹⁰ And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.¹¹ Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Ram'esses, as Pharaoh had commanded.¹² And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.

¹³ Now there was no food in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine.¹⁴ And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.¹⁵ And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, "Give us food; why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone."¹⁶ And Joseph answered, "Give your cattle, and I will give you food in exchange for your cattle, if your money is gone."¹⁷ So they brought their cattle to Joseph; and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and

the asses: and he supplied them with food in exchange for all their cattle that year.¹⁸ And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year, and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent; and the herds of cattle are my lord's; there is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands."¹⁹ Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we with our land will be slaves to Pharaoh; and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."

²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe upon them. The land became Pharaoh's;²¹ and as for the people, he made slaves of them[†] from one end of Egypt to the other.²² Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh, and lived on the allowance which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.²³ Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land."²⁴ And at the harvests you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones."²⁵ And they said, "You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be slaves to Pharaoh."²⁶ So

[†] Sam Gk Compare Vg: Heb he removed them to the cities

priestly tradition, *Jacob blessed Pharaoh*, presumably with the blessing of welfare and long life. ⁹: *The years of my sojourning*, see 17.8 n. Jacob's statement that his years had been *few and evil* reflects the view that there was an increasing shortening and troubling of man's life (see 5.4–32 n.). ¹¹: *The land of Rameses* (= Goshen), was named after Rameses II (see Ex.1.8,11 n.).

^{47.13–26}: *Joseph's agrarian program*, involving a change in the Egyptian system of land-tenure. ¹⁴: First, the people spent all their money for grain (compare 41.56). ^{15–17}: Next, in their desperation they exchanged all their cattle for food. ^{18–19}: Finally, they offered themselves and their lands to Pharaoh. ^{20–26}: The result was that former land-owners became tenants of Pharaoh, farming the land for him and paying him one-fifth of the produce as tax (v. 24). Temple lands were excepted (v. 22). Egyptian sources testify that such a feudalistic system was introduced between 1700–1500 B.C. ²⁵: The narrator does not intend to sanction absolutism but only to praise Joseph for his wisdom in delivering the people.

Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh's.

27 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly. 28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred and forty-seven years.

29 And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh, and promise to deal loyally and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but let me lie with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place." He answered, "I will do as you have said." 31 And he said, "Swear to me"; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

48 After this Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill"; so he took with him his two sons, Manas'seh and E'phraim. 2 And it was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you"; then Israel summoned his strength, and sat up in bed. 3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty" appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4 and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful, and multiply you, and I will make of

you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.' 5 And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; E'phraim and Manas'seh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. 6 And the offspring born to you after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7 For when I came from Paddan, Rachel to my sorrow died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" 9 Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, I pray you, that I may bless them." 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him; and he kissed them and embraced them. 11 And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; and lo, God has let me see your children also." 12 Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, E'phraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manas'seh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. 14 And Israel stretched out

u Heb *El Shaddai*

47.27-48.22: Jacob's adoption and blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. **29:** Put your hand under my thigh, see 24.2 n. **31:** Joseph binds himself by oath to bury Jacob in his fathers' burying place, i.e. Machpelah (ch. 23; 49.29-30; 50.12-13). *Jacob bowed himself upon the head of his bed* (compare Heb. 11.21), a gesture of reverence or gratitude (1 Kg.1.47). **48.3-4:** Jacob's adoption and blessing of Joseph's two sons are based on the divine promise given at Luz, or Bethel (35.9-13). **5-6:** By adopting his grandsons, Jacob gives them status equal to his eldest sons, Reuben and Simeon. The narrative accounts for the circumstance that "the house of Joseph" (Jos.17.14; 18.5; Jg.1.23,35) came to be divided into two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, each claiming full rank with the other tribes (49.22-26). **7:** 35.16-20. *Paddan(-aram)*, see 11.31 n. **12:** An adoption ceremony may be suggested by the boys' having been between or on Jacob's knees. **13-14:** Joseph brings Manasseh, his first-born, for the blessing of the right hand, but Jacob crosses his hands and puts his right hand on Ephraim, thereby giving him precedence. The narrator appeals to the ancient belief in the efficacy of the death-bed blessing (see 27.4 n.) to account for two facts: (1) Manasseh and Ephraim, located in the central hill country, were powerful tribes in early Israelite history; (2) the latter, during the period of the Judges and the

his right hand and laid it upon the head of E'phraim, who was the younger, and his left hand upon the head of Manas'seh, crossing his hands, for Manas'seh was the first-born. ¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph, and said,

"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has led me all my life long to this day,

¹⁶ the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads;

and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;

and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of E'phraim, it displeased him; and he took his father's hand, to remove it from E'phraim's head to Manas'seh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father; for this one is the first-born; put your right hand upon his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused, and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; nevertheless his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying,

"By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying,

'God make you as E'phraim and as Manas'seh';

and thus he put E'phraim before Manas'seh. ²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. ²² Moreover I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope" which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow."

49 Then Jacob called his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in days to come.

² Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father.

³ Reuben, you are my first-born, my might, and the first fruits of my strength, pre-eminent in pride and pre-eminent in power.

⁴ Unstable as water, you shall not have pre-eminence because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—you went up to my couch!

⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords.

v Heb *shekem*, shoulder

w Gk Syr Tg: Heb *he*

early monarchy, gained pre-eminence over the "first-born" tribe that once ranked first in leadership. **15-16:** Jacob invokes God by a threefold description: the God before whom his fathers walked (17.1; 24.40), who led (lit. "shepherded"; Ps.23.1) him throughout his life, who redeemed him from evil (Is.48.20). *The angel*, see 16.7 n. According to ancient belief, *the name*, that is, the psychic life of the fathers, was to be perpetuated in the two boys. **20:** Another version of the blessing (compare vv. 15-16). *Israel* here refers not to Jacob but to the people (34.7). *As Ephraim and Manasseh*, i.e. as fruitful with offspring as these tribes. **21:** Joseph died in Egypt and his bones were brought back to Canaan (see 46.4 n.). **22:** In Hebrew *one mountain slope* (or "shoulder") is a play on the name Shechem, the important city which lay in the territory of Joseph (see 12.6 n.). *With my sword and with my bow* reflects a different tradition from that in 33.19-20, which reports Jacob's peaceful coming to Shechem, and ch. 34, which describes his protest against his sons' attack upon the city (34.25-30). *Amorites*, see 10.15-20 n.

49.1-28: Jacob's blessing on his twelve sons. This poem, apparently dating from the time of David (see vv. 8-12), portrays the character of the tribes in the person of their ancestor (Dt. ch. 33). Although regarded as Jacob's death-bed blessing (v. 28), this is not an altogether adequate description, for the poet sometimes speaks words of censure or even curse (e.g. v. 7). On death-bed blessings, see 27.4 n. **1-2:** The futuristic language, *what shall befall you in days to come*, is relevant to the Judah oracle (vv. 8-12); the other oracles, however, describe chiefly past events or present circumstances. **3-4:** Reuben the first born, whose territory lay east of the

- ⁶ O my soul, come not into their council;
O my spirit,* be not joined to their company;
for in their anger they slay men,
and in their wantonness they hamstring oxen.
- ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
and their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
and scatter them in Israel.
- ⁸ Judah, your brothers shall praise you;
your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
your father's sons shall bow down before you.
- ⁹ Judah is a lion's whelp;
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He stooped down, he couched as a lion,
and as a lioness; who dares rouse him up?
- ¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until he comes to whom it belongs;^y
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.
- ¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine
and his ass's colt to the choice vine,
- he washes his garments in wine
and his vesture in the blood of grapes;
¹² his eyes shall be red with wine,
and his teeth white with milk.
- ¹³ Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea;
he shall become a haven for ships,
and his border shall be at Sidon.
- ¹⁴ Issachar is a strong ass,
crouching between the sheepfolds;
¹⁵ he saw that a resting place was good,
and that the land was pleasant;
so he bowed his shoulder to bear,
and became a slave at forced labor.
- ¹⁶ Dan shall judge his people
as one of the tribes of Israel.
- ¹⁷ Dan shall be a serpent in the way,
a viper by the path,
that bites the horse's heels
so that his rider falls backward.
- ¹⁸ I wait for thy salvation, O LORD.
- ¹⁹ Raiders^z shall raid Gad,
but he shall raid at their heels.
- ²⁰ Asher's food shall be rich,
and he shall yield royal dainties.

x Or *glory* y Syr Compare Tg: Heb *until Shiloh comes or until he comes to Shiloh* z Heb *gedud*, a raiding troop

Dead Sea, was once a leading tribe but in early times was overcome by the Moabites (Jg.5.15-16; Dt.33.6). **4:** *Your father's bed*, a reference to the ancestor's act of immorality (35.22), which typifies the tribe's moral weakness and instability. **5-7:** Simeon and Levi are considered together, for they led in the attack against Shechem with *weapons of violence* (34.25-30). Levi, once a full tribe, came to be a priestly class (Ex.32.26-29; Dt.10.8-9). Simeon was eventually absorbed into the tribe of Judah. **8-12:** This oracle reflects a situation, like that in David's time, when Judah had pre-eminence over the tribes. **10:** The first part of the verse portrays Judah as a sovereign; the second part, however, is very obscure (see note y). *To whom it belongs* refers to *the scepter, the ruler's staff* (Num.24.17). *Until he comes* may mean that after the kingdom of Judah has lasted for an indefinite time there will arise a ruler like David who will command *the obedience of the peoples* (Is.11.1-9). **11-12:** A picture of the marvelous fertility that will ensue. **13:** Zebulun will have a favorable position, no longer shut up in the interior (Jos.19.10-16) but with access to the Mediterranean Sea. Expansion into Asher's territory is assumed. **14-15:** Issachar is compared to a domesticated beast of burden, contented with a comfortable land and willing to surrender political independence in subservience to the Canaanites. **16-18:** Dan will rise to full tribal prestige by judging (i.e. getting justice for) his people. The Hebrew verb "judge" involves a play on the word Dan. The comparison with a *serpent in the way* portrays the insidious warfare of a small tribe in its rise to power. **19:** Gad, settled east of the Jordan just above Reuben, is cited for bravery in repelling Ammonite and desert marauders (Jg. ch. 11). **20:** Asher's land, situated on the coastal strip between Mount Carmel and Phoenicia, was so

- ²¹ Naph'tali is a hind let loose,
that bears comely fawns.^a
- ²² Joseph is a fruitful bough,
a fruitful bough by a spring;
his branches run over the wall.
- ²³ The archers fiercely attacked him,
shot at him, and harassed him
sorely;
- ²⁴ yet his bow remained unmoved,
his arms ^b were made agile
by the hands of the Mighty One of
Jacob
(by the name of the Shepherd,
the Rock of Israel),
- ²⁵ by the God of your father who will
help you,
by God Almighty^u who will bless
you
with blessings of heaven above,
blessings of the deep that couches
beneath,
blessings of the breasts and of the
womb.
- ²⁶ The blessings of your father
are mighty beyond the blessings
of the eternal mountains,^c
the bounties of the everlasting
hills;
may they be on the head of Joseph,
and on the brow of him who was
separate from his brothers.
- ²⁷ Benjamin is a ravenous wolf,
in the morning devouring the
prey,
and at even dividing the spoil."

28 All these are the twelve tribes of
Israel; and this is what their father said
to them as he blessed them, blessing

each with the blessing suitable to him.
²⁹ Then he charged them, and said
to them, "I am to be gathered to my
people; bury me with my fathers in the
cave that is in the field of Ephron the
Hittite, ³⁰ in the cave that is in the
field at Mach-pe'lah, to the east of
Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which
Abraham bought with the field from
Ephron the Hittite to possess as a
burying place. ³¹ There they buried
Abraham and Sarah his wife; there
they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife;
and there I buried Leah— ³² the field
and the cave that is in it were purchased
from the Hittites." ³³ When Jacob
finished charging his sons, he drew
up his feet into the bed, and breathed
his last, and was gathered to his
people.

50 Then Joseph fell on his father's
face, and wept over him, and
kissed him. ² And Joseph commanded
his servants the physicians to embalm
his father. So the physicians embalmed
Israel; ³ forty days were required for
it, for so many are required for em-
balming. And the Egyptians wept for
him seventy days.

4 And when the days of weeping
for him were past, Joseph spoke to the
household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now
I have found favor in your eyes,
speak, I pray you, in the ears of Phar-
aoh, saying, ⁵ My father made me
swear, saying, 'I am about to die: in
my tomb which I hewed out for myself
in the land of Canaan, there shall you

^a Or who gives beautiful words

^b Heb the arms of his hands

^u Heb El Shaddai

^c Compare Gk: Heb of my progenitors to

rich that it yielded *royal dainties* (Dt.33.24). **21:** The comparison of Naphtali to a *hind let loose* suggests the idea of freedom, agility, and vitality (compare Dt.33.23). **22-26:** A picture of the prosperity and strength of the populous tribe of Joseph, apparently harking back to a time before "the house of Joseph" was divided into the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, as in Dt.33.13-17 (see Gen. ch. 48). **24:** *The Mighty One of Jacob*, a title of "the God of the fathers" (v. 25a; Is.1.24; 49.26). **25:** *God Almighty*, see 17.1 n. *Blessings of heaven*, i.e. rain, dew, sun. *The deep that couches beneath* (Dt.33.13), an allusion to the subterranean ocean (see 1.2,6), believed to be the source of fertility (see 2.6 n.). **26:** The ancestral blessing surpasses even the majesty and fertility of the hills of Ephraim. *Separate*, i.e. set apart by prestige and position.

49.29-50.26: The death of Jacob and the final days of Joseph. **30-32:** *Machpelah*, see ch. 23. **50.2-3:** Embalming, an ancient Egyptian custom, was necessary if Jacob's body was to be carried back to Canaan. Egyptians are said to have mourned for a king seventy-two days; thus, out of respect for Joseph, Jacob was given a royal funeral. **5:** According to this fragment

bury me.' Now therefore let me go up, I pray you, and bury my father; then I will return." ⁶ And Pharaoh answered, "Go up, and bury your father, as he made you swear." ⁷ So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, ⁸ as well as all the household of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's household; only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. ⁹ And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; it was a very great company. ¹⁰ When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he made a mourning for his father seven days. ¹¹ When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning on the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." Therefore the place was named A'bel-mizraim;^d it is beyond the Jordan. ¹² Thus his sons did for him as he had commanded them; ¹³ for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field at Mach-pe'lah, to the east of Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite, to possess as a burying place. ¹⁴ After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and

pay us back for all the evil which we did to him." ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.' And now, we pray you, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him, and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he reassured them and comforted them.

²² So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's house; and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. ²³ And Joseph saw E'phraim's children of the third generation; the children also of Machir the son of Manas'seh were born upon Joseph's knees. ²⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die; but God will visit you, and bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵ Then Joseph took an oath of the sons of Israel, saying, "God will visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." ²⁶ So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

d That is meadow (or mourning) of Egypt

of tradition, Jacob hewed out a tomb for himself east of the Jordan (v. 10) and was buried there rather than at Machpelah (vv. 12-13). This explains why the funeral cortege detoured to Trans-jordan (vv. 10-11), though a main road led from Egypt along the coast to Beer-sheba. **18:** A recapitulation of the motif introduced at the beginning of the Joseph story (see 37.5-11 n.). **19-20:** The heart and climax of the Joseph story: Joseph asserts that only God can forgive and heal man's guilt, and he testifies to God's overruling providence which has already turned man's evil purposes to a good end (45.4-7). **23:** The children of *Machir*, Joseph's grandson, were born upon his knees, i.e. adopted as his descendants. Machir was the ancestor of a warlike clan of Manasseh which laid claim to Gilead (Num.32.39-40; Dt.3.15; Jg.5.14). **24:** An anticipation of the Exodus, based on the promise to the fathers. **25-26:** See Ex.13.19. According to tradition, Joseph was buried in Shechem (Jos.24.32; compare Gen.33.19; Acts 7.16).

EXODUS

In Israel's historical traditions the crucial event is the Exodus. Although Egyptian records make no reference to this border incident, there can be no doubt that Israel's faith rests upon an actual historical occurrence. Various lines of evidence point to the period of the 19th Dynasty (about 1350–1200 B.C.) as the most probable historical setting (see Ex.1.8 n.). The story unfolds against the background of Egyptian imperialism which motivated ambitious pharaohs to use Hebrew slaves as pawns in their scheme of world politics (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 7).

The book of Exodus bears witness to the religious meaning of what took place; namely, God's action to deliver a people from bondage and to bind them to himself in covenant. The book discloses an interweaving of traditions which preserve both the original Mosaic tradition and the interpretations of subsequent generations (see Introduction to Pentateuch). It falls into two major sections: (1) Israel's emancipation from Egyptian bondage and the pilgrimage to Sinai (chs. 1–18) and (2) Israel's sojourn at Sinai, where the covenant was made and the laws governing life and worship were promulgated (chs. 19–40).

At the center of the event stood Moses who was called to be the agent in delivering Israel from slavery, to be the interpreter of God's redemptive work, and to be the mediator of the covenant. Each tradition portrays him in a somewhat different light, but the whole account testifies to his massive influence upon subsequent history. Indeed, it was Moses who laid down the spiritual foundations of Israel's faith upon which later generations built.

THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, ³ Is'sachar, Zeb'ulun, and Benjamin, ⁴ Dan and Naph'tali, Gad and Asher. ⁵ All the offspring of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. ⁶ Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. ⁷ But the descendants of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong; so that the land was filled with them.

⁸ Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens; and they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Ram'ses. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and

1.1–22: Israel's bondage in Egypt. In spite of oppression, Abraham's descendants multiplied and prospered, in fulfillment of the divine promise (Gen.12.2; 15.5). **1–7:** Gen.35.23–26; 50.26. **5: Seventy persons,** Gen.46.8–27; Dt.10.22. The book of Exodus reflects the memory of decisive events in which, by faith, Israel as a people was involved. Strictly the twelve-tribe confederacy was formed later and embraced tribes that had not been in Egypt (Jos. ch. 24). **6:** Over four centuries elapsed since Joseph's death (12.40; compare Gen.15.13). **7:** The promise concerning Abraham's numerous posterity was being fulfilled (Gen.17.1–8; see Ex.12.37 n.). *The land,* see Gen.45.10 n.; 47.11 n. **8:** Probably the allusion is to the new regime at the beginning of the 19th Dynasty under Seti I (1308–1290 B.C.) and Rameses II (1290–1224 B.C.). Hoping to regain Egypt's lost Asiatic empire, the pharaohs moved their capital from Thebes, where it had been during the 18th Dynasty, to the Delta. **9–10:** The presence of the Hebrews on Egypt's frontier was regarded as a security risk. **11: Store cities,** an allusion to the fortification of the area. The new capital, *Raamses* or Rameses (Zoan; Ps.78.12), was the former Hyksos capital (Avaris or Tanis) of Joseph's time (see Gen.45.10 n.; Num.13.22). As in the case of the pyramids, the work was carried out with the corvée (compare 1 Kg.5.13). **15: Hebrew,** an older and broader term

the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. ¹³ So they made the people of Israel serve with rigor, ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field; in all their work they made them serve with rigor.

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiph'rah and the other Pu'ah, ¹⁶ "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, she shall live." ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called the midwives, and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and are delivered before the midwife comes to them." ²⁰ So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and grew very strong. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God he gave them families. ²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews^a you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."

2 Now a man from the house of Levi went and took to wife a daughter of Levi. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. ³ And when she could hide

him no longer she took for him a basket made of bulrushes, and daubed it with bitumen and pitch; and she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds at the river's brink. ⁴ And his sister stood at a distance, to know what would be done to him. ⁵ Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked beside the river; she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to fetch it. ⁶ When she opened it she saw the child; and lo, the babe was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" ⁸ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. ⁹ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away, and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. ¹⁰ And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son; and she named him Moses,^b for she said, "Because I drew him out of the water."

¹¹ One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. ¹² He looked this way and that, and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ When he went out the next

^a Sam Gk Tg: Heb lacks to the Hebrews
^b Heb Mosheh ^c Heb mashah

than Israelite (see Gen.10.21-31 n.), was often used when foreigners spoke to or about Abraham's people (Gen.39.14,17; 40.15). **19:** See vv. 7,12.

2.1-22: The infancy and early career of Moses. **1:** It was probably the Joseph tribes that took part in the Exodus, although elements of the tribe of Levi were also in Egypt. **2-10:** Aspects of this story are paralleled in the legends of other national heroes, e.g. Sargon of Agade (about 2600 B.C.) who in infancy was saved from danger by being put in a basket of rushes sealed with pitch and floated on the river. **4:** Moses' sister was Miriam (Num.26.59). **10:** The name *Moses*, from an Egyptian word meaning "to beget a child" and perhaps once joined with the name of an Egyptian deity (compare the name Thut-mose), is here explained by a Hebrew verb meaning "to draw out." The narrator sees divine providence at work, causing the evil design of Pharaoh to serve God's purpose. **11-14:** In spite of his Egyptian upbringing Moses identified himself

day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together; and he said to the man that did the wrong, "Why do you strike your fellow?" ¹⁴ He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses.

But Moses fled from Pharaoh, and stayed in the land of Mid'ian; and he sat down by a well. ¹⁶ Now the priest of Mid'ian had seven daughters; and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ The shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. ¹⁸ When they came to their father Reu'el, he said, "How is it that you have come so soon today?" ¹⁹ They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and even drew water for us and watered the flock." ²⁰ He said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." ²¹ And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zippo'rah. ²² She bore a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, "I have been a sojourner^d in a foreign land."

²³ In the course of those many days the king of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage,

and cried out for help, and their cry under bondage came up to God. ²⁴ And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ And God saw the people of Israel, and God knew their condition.

3 Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Mid'ian; and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here am I." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the LORD said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand

d Heb ger

with his people (Heb.11.24-25). **15:** The Midianites were distant blood relatives of Israel (Gen.25.2). **18:** "The priest of Midian" (v. 16) is usually called either Jethro (3.1; 4.18; 18.1) or Hobab (Num.10.29; Jg.4.11). *Reuel* was apparently his father (Num.10.29).

2.23-4.17: The call of Moses. In Midian the God of the fathers revealed himself to Moses and summoned him to be his agent in delivering Israel. **23:** *The king* was probably Seti I (see 1.8 n). The Israelites hoped that their condition would improve under the new regime, but Rameses II continued the oppressive building program. **24:** On the covenant with the fathers, see Gen.12.1-3; 17.1-14; 26.2-5. **3.1-6:** The theophany of the bush. **1:** *The mountain of God*, called both Horeb and Sinai, was probably a Midianite sacred place (see v. 5 n.). Its location is unknown, but tradition places it in the eastern part of the Sinaitic Peninsula. **2:** *The angel of the LORD*, see Gen.16.7 n. *Fire* was conceived to be the form of the divine appearance (Gen.15.17; Ex.19.18; Ps.104.3-4; Ezek.1.27). **5:** Moses unexpectedly found himself in a holy place (see v. 1 n.; Gen.28.16-17). The removal of sandals before entering a holy place was an ancient custom (Jos.5.15). **6:** *The God of your father*, see Gen.26.24 n. The vision of God veiled in fire aroused dread (33.20), for divine holiness was experienced as a mysterious power that threatened man's existence (19.10-13). **7-12:** The divine commission. **8:** *Canaan was a land flowing with*

of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites. ⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "But I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain."

¹³ Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." ^e And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. ¹⁶ Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your

fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt; ¹⁷ and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" ¹⁸ And they will hearken to your voice; and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, we pray you, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' ¹⁹ I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. ²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all the wonders which I will do in it; after that he will let you go. ²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, ²² but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her who sojourns in her house, jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; thus you shall despoil the Egyptians."

4 Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say,

^e Or I AM WHAT I AM or I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE
^f The word LORD when spelled with capital letters, stands for the divine name, YHWH, which is here connected with the verb *hayah*, to be
^g Gk Vg: Heb no, not by a mighty hand

milk and honey, foods that made it a paradise in the eyes of semi-nomads. On the pre-Israelite peoples, see Gen.10.15-20; Num.13.29. **11-12**: The first of Moses' four objections (v. 13; 4.1,10). God's word will be confirmed by a *sign* (compare Is.7.10-17), i.e. the return of Israel to Sinai for worship. A sign may be an extraordinary wonder (4.1-9) or an ordinary phenomenon. What makes it significant, and therefore miraculous, is that God's presence and power are disclosed to faith. **13-15**: Moses' second question assumes a polytheistic environment; thus he must know the identity of the God who is dealing with him. On the *name*, see Gen.32.27 n. **14**: I AM who I AM is an etymology of the Israelite name for God, YHWH, probably pronounced Yahweh. (The RSV, following ancient synagogue practice, substitutes "the LORD"; see the Preface, pp. xi-xii). YHWH is treated as a verbal form derived from "to be" and formulated in the first person because God is the speaker. Actually YHWH is a third person form and may mean "He causes to be." The name does not indicate God's eternal being but his action and presence in historical affairs. **15**: The name is here introduced for the first time (6.2-3; see Gen.4.26b n.). **21-22**: See 11.2-3; 12.35-36. **4.1-9**: This narrative reflects superstitious magic which flourished

'The LORD did not appear to you.' "

² The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."

³ And he said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.

⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand, and take it by the tail"—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand—
⁵ "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

⁶ Again, the LORD said to him, "Put your hand into your bosom." And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. ⁷ Then God said, "Put your hand back into your bosom." So he put his hand back into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. ⁸ "If they will not believe you," God said, "or heed the first sign, they may believe the latter sign." ⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or heed your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it upon the dry ground; and the water which you shall take from the Nile will become blood upon the dry ground."

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of tongue." ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and

I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." ¹³ But he said, "Oh, my Lord, send, I pray, some other person." ¹⁴ Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well; and behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart." ¹⁵ And you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. ¹⁶ He shall speak for you to the people; and he shall be a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. ¹⁷ And you shall take in your hand this rod, with which you shall do the signs."

¹⁸ Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me go back, I pray, to my kinsmen in Egypt and see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." ¹⁹ And the LORD said to Moses in Mid'ian, "Go back to Egypt; for all the men who were seeking your life are dead." ²⁰ So Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on an ass, and went back to the land of Egypt; and in his hand Moses took the rod of God.

²¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. ²² And you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my first-born son,' ²³ and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may

in Egypt and claims that Moses was given power to excel these "secret arts" (7.11; 8.18-19; 9.11). ³: 7.8-12. Serpent magic was practiced in Egypt from ancient times. The sign was the reverse of a trick whereby a snake is made rigid by hypnotism, so that it can be picked up by the tail. ¹⁰⁻¹⁷: Aaron is designated as Moses' aide. ¹¹: Jer.1.6. In Hebraic thought human conditions were not ascribed to secondary causes but to God whose will is sovereign in all things (Dt.32.39). ¹⁶: The relation between God and his prophetic spokesman is analogous to the relation between Moses and Aaron (7.1; compare 16.9).

4.18-31: Moses returns to Egypt to arouse the faith of his people. 20: Only one of Moses' sons has been mentioned so far (2.22); see 18.3-4. **21:** Even Pharaoh's stubbornness, which paradoxically was the expression of his own free will (8.15,32; 9.34), was foreknown (3.19) and foreordained by God, thus indicating divine sovereignty in historical affairs (compare Is.6.10). **22:** *Israel* (the people) is the LORD's *first-born son* among the nations, a pre-eminent rank based

serve me"; if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay your first-born son.' "

24 At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to kill him.

25 Then Zippo'rah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' feet with it, and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!"

26 So he let him alone. Then it was that she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

27 The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went, and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him, and all the signs which he had charged him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. 30 And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.' " 2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover I will not let Israel go." 3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met

with us; let us go, we pray, a three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." 4 But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get to your burdens." 5 And Pharaoh said, "Behold, the people of the land are now many and you make them rest from their burdens!" 6 The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, 7 "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves.

8 But the number of bricks which they made heretofore you shall lay upon them, you shall by no means lessen it; for they are idle; therefore they cry, 'Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.' 9 Let heavier work be laid upon the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words."

10 So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, "Thus says Pharaoh, 'I will not give you straw. 11 Go yourselves, get your straw wherever you can find it; but your work will not be lessened in the least.' " 12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble for straw. 13 The taskmasters were urgent, saying, "Complete your work, your daily task, as when there was straw." 14 And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and were asked, "Why have you not

upon divine adoption or election (Jer.31.9; Hos.11.1). 23: 11.5; 12.29-34. 24-26: An archaic tradition which traces the origin of circumcision (compare Gen.17.9-14) to the Midianite wife of Moses. 24: This verse reflects ancient belief in demonic attack (see Gen.38.7 n.), warded off by the timely performance of the rite. Originally circumcision was a puberty or marriage rite; *bridegroom of blood* (v. 26) is perhaps an old expression for a young man who was circumcised before marriage. 25: Here it is assumed that the circumcision of the infant son was efficacious for Moses, who was evidently uncircumcised. *Feet*, a euphemism for the sexual organs (Is.7.20). 27: *The mountain of God* (3.1), which Moses had already left (4.20).

5.1-6.1: *The first audience with Pharaoh fails*. 1: The petition is for a leave of absence for a pilgrimage to the sacred mountain (v. 3; 3.18). 2: The contemptuous Pharaoh, whose absolute power was enforced by his deification in Egyptian religion, knew many gods; but this "god," the LORD, was unheard of and a request made in his name carried no authority. 9: Compare 1 Kg.12.1-11. Pharaoh treats the request for a three-day journey as *lying words*, i.e. a ruse to

done all your task of making bricks today, as hitherto?"

15 Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, "Why do you deal thus with your servants? 16 No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks!' And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people." 17 But he said, "You are idle, you are idle; therefore you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' 18 Go now, and work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the same number of bricks." 19 The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in evil plight, when they said, "You shall by no means lessen your daily number of bricks." 20 They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came forth from Pharaoh; 21 and they said to them, "The LORD look upon you and judge, because you have made us offensive in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

22 Then Moses turned again to the LORD and said, "O LORD, why hast thou done evil to this people? Why didst thou ever send me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he has done evil to this people, and thou hast not delivered thy people

6 at all." 1 But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, yea, with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

2 And God said to Moses, "I am the LORD. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty,^h

but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. 4 I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they dwelt as sojourners. 5 Moreover I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold in bondage and I have remembered my covenant. 6 Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment, 7 and I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.' " 9 Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel; but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel bondage.

10 And the LORD said to Moses, 11 "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land." 12 But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me; how then shall Pharaoh listen to me, who am a man of uncircumcised lips?" 13 But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a charge to the people of Israel and to Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

14 These are the heads of their

^h Heb *El Shaddai*

leave the country permanently. 16: The foremen diplomatically suggest that the fault lies with Pharaoh's subordinates, i.e. *your own people*. 21: The LORD . . . judge, i.e. give Moses and Aaron due justice for worsening their plight.

6.2-7.7: The call of Moses and the appointment of Aaron are recapitulated in a priestly version (compare 3.1-6.2). 2-3: See 3.14 n. The LORD (YHWH) is the same God who led the patriarchs but formerly he was known by another name, El Shaddai (see Gen.17.1 n.). 4: The *covenant* is the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. ch. 17) which guaranteed possession of Canaan (v. 8). *Sojourners*, see Gen.17.8 n. 7: *My people . . . your God*, a succinct statement of the meaning of the covenant relation (Hos.2.23; Jer.31.33). 12: *Uncircumcised lips* are sealed lips; a vivid way of saying that Moses was a man poor in speech (4.10-16). The answer to Moses' question, inter-

fathers' houses: the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben. ¹⁵ The sons of Simeon: Jemu'el, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon. ¹⁶ These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merar'i, the years of the life of Levi being a hundred and thirty-seven years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shim'e-i, by their families. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uz'ziel, the years of the life of Kohath being a hundred and thirty-three years. ¹⁹ The sons of Merar'i: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations. ²⁰ Amram took to wife Joch'ebed his father's sister and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being one hundred and thirty-seven years. ²¹ The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. ²² And the sons of Uz'ziel: Mi'sha-el, Elza'phan, and Sithri. ²³ Aaron took to wife Eli'sheba, the daughter of Ammin'adab and the sister of Nahshon; and she bore him Nadab, Abi'hu, Elea'zar, and Ith'amar. ²⁴ The sons of Korah: Assir, Elka'nah, and Abi'asaph; these are the families of the Ko'rahites. ²⁵ Elea'zar, Aaron's son, took to wife one of the daughters of Pu'ti-el; and she bore him Phin'ehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites by their families.

²⁶ These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said: "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts." ²⁷ It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the people of Israel

from Egypt, this Moses and this Aaron.

²⁸ On the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, ²⁹ the LORD said to Moses, "I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you." ³⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips; how then shall Pharaoh listen to me?" ¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. ² You shall speak all that I command you; and Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, ⁴ Pharaoh will not listen to you; then I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring forth my hosts, my people the sons of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them." ⁶ And Moses and Aaron did so; they did as the LORD commanded them. ⁷ Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

⁸ And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Prove yourselves by working a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'" ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as the LORD commanded; Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and they also, the magicians of

rupted by vv. 14-27, is found in v. 28 to 7.2. **14-27:** The purpose of the genealogy of Aaron and Moses is to trace priestly lineage from Levi, Jacob's son, to Aaron and through Aaron's third son, Eleazar, to Phinehas (Num. ch. 3). **14-16:** Gen.46.8-11. *Fathers' houses*, see Num.1.2-3 n. **28-30:** Continuation from v. 12. **7.1:** See 4.16 n. **2:** See 5.1 where both Moses and Aaron are to speak to the king; here the role of Aaron, the priest, is stressed. **3-4:** See 4.21 n. The *great acts of judgment* (6.6) are the signs and wonders.

7.8-11.10: The ten plagues (Pss.78.44-51; 105.28-36). **8-13:** The preface to the contest with Pharaoh is drawn from priestly tradition (compare 4.1-5). Here Aaron is the chief actor and his

Egypt, did the same by their secret arts.¹² For every man cast down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.¹³ Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the LORD had said.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuses to let the people go."¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water; wait for him by the river's brink, and take in your hand the rod which was turned into a serpent.¹⁶ And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; and behold, you have not yet obeyed."' ¹⁷ Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the rod that is in my hand, and it shall be turned to blood,¹⁸ and the fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile shall become foul, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink water from the Nile." ' ' ' ¹⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.' "

20 Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded; in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, he lifted up the rod and struck the water that was in the Nile, and all the water

that was in the Nile turned to blood.²¹ And the fish in the Nile died; and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts; so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the LORD had said.²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not lay even this to heart.²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug round about the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

25 Seven days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."² But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs;³ the Nile shall swarm with frogs which shall come up into your house, and into your bed-chamber and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and of your people,⁴ and into your ovens and your kneading bowls;⁵ the frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.' " ' ' ^{5k} And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the rivers, over the canals, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come upon the land of Egypt!' " ' ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the

i Ch 7.26 in Heb
j Gk: Heb upon your people
k Ch 8.1 in Heb

rod—not Moses'—is turned into a serpent or dragon. **14–24: First plague:** the pollution of the Nile. **15:** Moses was to meet Pharaoh *at the river's brink* with a challenge to Egyptian existence; for the Nile, believed to have its source in the subterranean ocean (see Gen.2.6 n.), was the source of life and fertility. **17–18:** The plague of blood apparently reflects a natural phenomenon of Egypt: namely, the reddish color of the Nile at its height in the summer owing to red particles of earth or perhaps minute organisms. **19:** The tendency to enhance the tradition is seen in the facts that here the rod is Aaron's (see 4.14; 7.2) and that all the water of Egypt is said to have been polluted. **22:** See v. 11.

7.25–8.15: Second plague: frogs. **8.3:** The mud of the Nile, after the seasonal overflowing, was a natural place for frogs to generate. Egypt has been spared more frequent occurrence of this pestilence by the frog-eating bird, the ibis. **5–7:** Another unit of tradition which extols

land of Egypt. ⁷ But the magicians did the same by their secret arts, and brought frogs upon the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD to take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." ⁹ Moses said to Pharaoh, "Be pleased to command me when I am to entreat, for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile." ¹⁰ And he said, "Tomorrow." Moses said, "Be it as you say, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. ¹¹ The frogs shall depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they shall be left only in the Nile." ¹² So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. ¹³ And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; the frogs died out of the houses and courtyards and out of the fields. ¹⁴ And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and would not listen to them; as the LORD had said.

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats throughout all the land of Egypt.'" ¹⁷ And they did so; Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and there came gnats on man and beast; all the dust of the earth became gnats throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁸ The magicians tried by their secret

arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁹ And the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the LORD had said.

20 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and wait for Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me." ²¹ Else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. ²² But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there; that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. ²³ Thus I will put a division^m between my people and your people. By tomorrow shall this sign be.'" ²⁴ And the LORD did so; there came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses, and in all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by reason of the flies.

25 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." ²⁶ But Moses said, "It would not be right to do so; for we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God offerings abominable to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? ²⁷ We

*l Or which he had brought upon Pharaoh
m Gk Vg: Heb set redemption*

Aaron the priest (7.19). **8:** *Entreat the LORD*, for the first time Pharaoh momentarily recognizes Israel's God. **9-11:** To enhance the wonder, Moses promises to pray that the scourge cease at a designated time.

8.16-32: Third and fourth plagues: gnats and flies. **16:** From ancient times stinging gnats or mosquitoes have plagued Egypt, especially in the autumn. The Nile, receding from its overflow, leaves stagnant pools of water in which the insects breed. On Aaron's rod, see 7.19; 8.5-7. **19:** This time the magicians are unable to match the feat and confess that *this is the finger of God* (31.18; Ps.8.3; Lk.11.20). **20-32:** The fourth plague is probably a variant of vv. 16-19. **22-23:** The sign was not just the coming of myriads of flies but the isolation of Goshen so that the scourge did not affect the Hebrews. **26:** Egypt had strong taboos against the religious prac-

must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he will command us."

²⁸ So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make entreaty for me."

²⁹ Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you and I will pray to the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; only let not Pharaoh deal falsely again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." ³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD.

³¹ And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. ³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. ² For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, ³ behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your cattle which are in the field, the horses, the asses, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. ⁴ But the LORD will make a distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, so that nothing shall die of all that belongs to the people of Israel." ' " ⁵ And the LORD set a time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." ⁶ And on the morrow the LORD did this thing; all the cattle of the Egyptians died, but of the cattle of the people of Israel not one died. ⁷ And Pharaoh sent, and behold,

not one of the cattle of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

⁸ And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of ashes from the kiln, and let Moses throw them toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

⁹ And it shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." ¹⁰ So they took ashes from the kiln, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses threw them toward heaven, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. ¹¹ And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. ¹² But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them; as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

¹³ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. ¹⁴ For this time I will send all my plagues upon your heart, and upon your servants and your people, that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For by now I could have put forth my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth; ¹⁶ but for this purpose have I let you live, to show you my power, so that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. ¹⁷ You are still exalting yourself against my people, and will not let them go. ¹⁸ Be-

trices of foreigners (Gen.43.32). **28:** Pharaoh's further concession-permission to go just beyond the border-reflects his suspicion of Moses' intention (5.9).

9.1-12: Fifth and sixth plagues: cattle plague and boils. **3:** This plague, perhaps anthrax, seems to have resulted from conditions created by former plagues: disease spread by mosquitoes or flies. **4:** See 8.22-23 n. **5:** This time Pharaoh was given twenty-four hours notice. **8-12:** The sixth plague, boils or a similar skin outbreak (Dt.28.27), is parallel to the previous one, so far as the cattle are concerned. **13-35: Seventh plague:** hail and thunderstorm. **14:** *All my plagues upon your heart* is not clear but may refer to unleashing the full fury of heaven: thunder, hail, rain, and lightning (vv. 23,33). **15-16:** It is explained that the ineffectiveness of the plagues up to this point is not due to the LORD's weakness but to his patient determination to demon-

hold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ Now therefore send, get your cattle and all that you have in the field into safe shelter; for the hail shall come down upon every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home, and they shall die.” ²⁰ Then he who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his slaves and his cattle flee into the houses; ²¹ but he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his slaves and his cattle in the field.

²² And the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch forth your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man and beast and every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” ²³ Then Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt; ²⁴ there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck down everything that was in the field throughout all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and the hail struck down every plant of the field, and shattered every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, there was no hail.

²⁷ Then Pharaoh sent, and called Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “I have sinned this time; the LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Entreat the LORD; for there has been enough of this thunder and hail; I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” ²⁹ Moses said to him,

“As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the LORD’s. ³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God.”

³¹ (The flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they are late in coming up.) ³³ So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and stretched out his hands to the LORD; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. ³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵ So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

10 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, ² and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your son’s son how I have made sport of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them; that you may know that I am the LORD.”

³ So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. ⁴ For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, ⁵ and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land; and they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat

strate his sovereignty (compare Rom.9.17). ²⁶: See vv. 6–7; 8.22–23 n. ²⁷: For the first time Pharaoh confesses that he is beaten, hoping thus to appease the foreign deity without making further concessions. ²⁸: The plagues bear witness to the fact that *the earth is the LORD’s* (19.5; Ps.24.1), for the powers of nature serve his purpose. ^{31–32}: This parenthetical remark explains why there were still plants for the locusts to eat during the next plague and, incidentally, dates the seventh plague around the middle of January, when the crops begin to mature.

10.1–20: Eighth plague: locusts. **4–6:** Clouds of locusts were a familiar pestilence to farmers

every tree of yours which grows in the field, ⁶ and they shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians; as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

7 And Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God; do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?” ⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh; and he said to them, “Go, serve the LORD your God; but who are to go?” ⁹ And Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.” ¹⁰ And he said to them, “The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind.” ¹¹ No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.” ¹³ So Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning the east wind had brought the locusts. ¹⁴ And the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt, and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever shall be

again. ¹⁵ For they covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, forgive my sin, I pray you, only this once, and entreat the LORD your God only to remove this death from me.” ¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. ¹⁹ And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. ²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; ²³ they did not see one another, nor did any rise from his place for three days; but all the people of Israel had light where they dwelt. ²⁴ Then Pharaoh called Moses, and said, “Go, serve the LORD; your children also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.” ²⁵ But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. ²⁶ Our cattle also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and

n Heb before your face

in the ancient Near East (see Joel). 7–11: At the insistence of his impressed courtiers, Pharaoh attempts to negotiate before the twenty-four hour deadline (9.5); he offers to let only the men go, since adult males took part in the religious rites (23.17; 34.23; Dt.16.16). 13: The miracle rests upon a natural phenomenon (14.21; Num.11.31); an *east wind* brought the locusts and, when the wind shifted, a *west wind* drove them into the Red Sea (v. 19).

10.21–29: Ninth plague: thick darkness. 21: *A darkness to be felt* aptly describes conditions created by the hot wind, the “khamsin,” which blows in from the desert during the spring (March-May), bringing with it so much dust and sand that the air is darkened and breathing becomes difficult. 23b: Compare 8.22–23; 9.6–7,26.

we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there.”

²⁷ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

²⁸ Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me; take heed to yourself; never see my face again; for in the day you see my face you shall die.”

²⁹ Moses said, “As you say! I will not see your face again.”

|| The LORD said to Moses, “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence; when he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. ² Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, jewelry of silver and of gold.”

³ And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

⁴ And Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go forth in the midst of Egypt; ⁵ and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits upon his throne, even to the first-born of the maidservant who is behind the mill; and all the first-born of the cattle. ⁶ And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever shall be again. ⁷ But against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, not a dog shall growl; that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel. ⁸ And

all these your servants shall come down to me, and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get you out, and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”

¹⁰ Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

12 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² “This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; ⁴ and if the household is too small for a lamb, then a man and his neighbor next to his house shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; ⁶ and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. ⁷ Then they shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. ⁸ They shall eat

o Heb between the two evenings

11.1–10: The announcement of the final plague, the death of the first-born (concluded in 12.29–32). **2–3:** The “spoliation of the Egyptians” (3.21–22; 12.35–36) is explained as evidence of the favor which Moses and the Israelites had gained in Egypt.

12.1–28: The feasts of passover and unleavened bread. **1–13** (and vv. 43–49): This is priestly tradition concerning the passover, an ancient nomadic spring festival which Israel reinterpreted as a memorial of the LORD's deliverance of his people from Egypt (Dt.16.1–8; Num.9.1–14; Ezek.45.21–25). **2:** *This month* refers to Nisan (March–April) which in the post-exilic ecclesiastical calendar was the *beginning of months* (see Lev.23.5,23–25 n.). According to the older agricultural calendar, the new year began in the autumn (Ex.23.16; 34.22). **3–4:** Priestly tradition assumes that Israel in Egypt was already an organized *congregation* under the leadership of tribal princes (16.22). *Father's houses*, see Num.1.2–3 n. The passover was a nocturnal festival, celebrated during full moon (v. 8; see Is.30.29). **7:** Blood, regarded as the deity's portion of the sacrifice (Lev.1.5), was smeared on the doorposts and the lintel, the holy places of the house

the flesh that night, roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled with water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts.

¹⁰ And you shall let none of it remain until the morning, anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

¹¹ In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses, for if any one eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly; no work shall be done on those days; but what

every one must eat, that only may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt: therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as an ordinance for ever. ¹⁸ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, and so until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for if any one eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread."

²¹ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said to them, "Select lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood which is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. ²³ For the LORD will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you. ²⁴ You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and for your sons for ever. ²⁵ And

(21.6; Dt.6.9), as a protection against the destroyer (vv. 22-23; see 4.24 n.). **11:** The feast must be eaten in readiness for the march, in commemoration of Israel's hasty exodus. **12-13:** Here *passover* is interpreted from a verb meaning "to pass over," referring to the LORD's passing over Israelite houses during the plague of the first-born (vv. 24-27). **14-20:** The feast of unleavened cakes, originally an agricultural festival held at the time of barley harvest, was also converted into an historical commemoration and came to be closely connected with the passover (Dt.16.1-8; Ezek.45.21-25). **14:** The passover was celebrated on the 14th of Nisan (v. 6); *this day* refers to the 15th (Lev.23.6; Num.28.17). The seven day festival is regarded as a continuation of the passover. **15:** The absence of leaven (yeast) is interpreted as due to hasty preparations for flight (vv. 34,39; Dt.16.3). Originally leaven, owing to its fermenting or corrupting power (23.18; Mt.16.6; 1 Cor.5.7), was regarded as a ritually unclean substance (compare Lev.2.11) which could contaminate the whole harvest. **18:** So closely is the festival combined with the passover that it is said to begin on the evening of the 14th, i.e. the night of the passover (see v. 14). **21-28:** An older tradition concerning the passover. **22:** See v. 7 n. *Hyssop*, the foliage of an aromatic plant. Because of its presumed magical powers, it was used for ritual purposes (Lev.14.4; Num.19.6,18; Ps.51.7). **23:** *The destroyer*, or the angel of death (2 Sam.24.16; Is.37.36), was regarded as a manifestation of the LORD's power.

when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service.²⁶ And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'²⁷ you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he slew the Egyptians but spared our houses.' And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

28 Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

29 At midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle.³⁰ And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where one was not dead.³¹ And he summoned Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise up, go forth from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said."³² Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also!"

33 And the Egyptians were urgent with the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, "We are all dead men."³⁴ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their mantles on their shoulders.³⁵ The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked

of the Egyptians jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing;³⁶ and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they despoiled the Egyptians.

37 And the people of Israel journeyed from Ram'ses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.³⁸ A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very many cattle, both flocks and herds.³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any provisions.

40 The time that the people of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.⁴¹ And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.⁴² It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.

43 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the passover: no foreigner shall eat of it;⁴⁴ but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him.⁴⁵ No sojourner or hired servant may eat of it.⁴⁶ In one house shall it be eaten; you shall not carry forth any of the flesh outside the house; and you shall not break a bone

12.29-50: Israel's departure from Egypt. 29-32: The conclusion of the tenth plague (11.1-10). 33-34: See v. 15 n. 35-36: See 3.21-22 and 11.2-3. 37: Rameses (1.11) and Succoth (13.20) were the starting places on Israel's itinerary (Num.33.5). *Six hundred thousand men on foot* (Num.11.21), in addition to women and children, is an exaggeration, for neither the land of Goshen nor the southern Palestinian wilderness could have supported so large a population (at least two and a half million). The number apparently reflects the census list in Num.1.17-46. 38: The *mixed multitude* (Num.11.4) included other "Hebrews" (see 1.15 n.) or rootless people. 40: If the four hundred and thirty years (see Gen.15.13; Acts 7.6 n.; Gal.3.17 n.) covers the total time of the Egyptian sojourn, then the descent into Egypt coincided with the Hyksos invasion (about 1720 B.C.; see Gen.45.10 n.) and the Exodus occurred during the reign of Rameses II, about 1290 B.C. (see 1.8 n.). 42: The *night of watching* refers to the passover. 43-49: A supplement to the priestly tradition about the passover (12.1-13). A *foreigner* (v. 43), a *visiting sojourner*, and a *hired servant* (v. 45) are excluded on the ground that they are related to other gods; however, the purchased slave who becomes a part of the family (v. 44) and the

of it. ⁴⁷ All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. ⁴⁸ And when a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. ⁴⁹ There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."

⁵⁰ Thus did all the people of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. ⁵¹ And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

13 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Consecrate to me all the first-born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine."

³ And Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place; no leavened bread shall be eaten."

⁴ This day you are to go forth, in the month of Abib. ⁵ And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month.

⁶ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. ⁷ Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen

with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. ⁸ And you shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' ⁹ And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. ¹⁰ You shall therefore keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.

¹¹ "And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, ¹² you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstlings of your cattle that are males shall be the LORD's. ¹³ Every firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every first-born of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴ And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. ¹⁵ For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb; but all the first-born of my sons I redeem.' ¹⁶ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes; for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

sojourner who resides permanently within Israel may eat the passover, if the *one law* of circumcision is kept (Gen.17.9-14).

13.1-16: The consecration of the first-born. **2:** According to ancient belief, the devotion of the first-born of man and beast to God, the giver of fertility, was necessary for continuing increase and well-being (22.29b-30; Lev.27.26-27; Num.3.13; 8.17-18; 18.15). **3-10:** Old tradition about the feast of unleavened bread (compare the parallel priestly version, 12.14-20). **4:** *Abib*, the older name for the month of the Exodus (23.15; see 12.2 n.). **5:** See 3.8. **8:** In later times a man could tell *what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt*, for in worship the redemptive event was made present (12.26-27; see Dt.5.2-3 n.). **9:** See Dt.6.8. **11-16:** An old tradition about the consecration of the first-born. **13:** Unclean animals, of which the ass is typical (Lev. ch. 11; Dt. ch. 14), may be redeemed by substituting a lamb. In early times the custom arose of substituting an animal for the human first-born (34.19-20; compare Gen.22.13), although pagan human sacrifice persisted (1 Kg.16.34; 2 Kg.16.3; Ezek.20.26; Mic.6.7). **14-15:** The practice, rooted in ancient fertility beliefs, is here reinterpreted in the light of the Exodus.

17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt."¹⁸ But God led the people round by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.¹⁹ And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, "God will visit you; then you must carry my bones with you from here."²⁰ And they moved on from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness.²¹ And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night;²² the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses,² "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-ha-hi'roth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Ba'al-ze'phon; you shall encamp over against it, by the sea."³ For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, "They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in."⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

5 When the king of Egypt was told

that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him,⁷ and took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.⁸ And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly.⁹ The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-ha-hi'roth, in front of Ba'al-ze'phon.

10 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were in great fear. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD;¹¹ and they said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, in bringing us out of Egypt?"¹² Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."¹³ And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again."¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be still."¹⁵ The LORD said to

13.17-14.22. Israel's deliverance. 17-18: *Philistines*, see Gen.21.34 n. The route mentioned was the main military road into Canaan. To avoid attack, the people were providentially led round by the way of the wilderness. On the Red Sea, see 14.2 n. **19:** See Gen.50.25-26 n. **21-22:** The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire may reflect the ancient custom of carrying a burning brazier at the head of a marching army or caravan to indicate the line of march by day and night. Whatever the nature of the phenomenon originally, cloud and fire have become traditional ways of expressing God's presence and guidance (see 3.2 n.; 19.9; 33.9; 40.34-38; 1 Kg.8.10-11). **14.2:** The places mentioned, like Etham (13.20), were probably Egyptian frontier fortresses. Apparently the Israelites were unable to break through and had to turn back, with the result that they were trapped (v. 3) between the water barrier and the Egyptian forces. The sea, known in Hebrew as the "sea of reeds," was not the Red Sea itself but a shallow body of water farther north, perhaps in the area of Lake Timsah. **11-12:** See 15.24 n. **13-14:** Viewed in faith, the victory was a mighty act of the LORD who was fighting for his people in a contest with the powerful

Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea. ¹⁷ And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

¹⁹ Then the angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed^p without one coming near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians, ²⁵ clogging^q their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel; for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." ²⁷ So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the LORD routed^r the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host^s of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained. ²⁹ But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. ³¹ And Israel saw the great work which the LORD did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD; and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

15 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider^t he has thrown into the sea.

² The LORD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

^p Gk: Heb and it lit up the night

^q Or binding. Sam Gk Syr: Heb removing

^r Heb shook off

^s Gk Syr: Heb to all the host

^t Or its chariot

Pharaoh (v. 25). *Salvation*, see Gen.49.18.19-20: One tradition expresses the divine presence as the *angel of God* (see Gen.16.7 n.), another as the shining pillar of cloud (v. 24; see 13.21-22 n.). 21-29: The divine victory was rooted in a natural phenomenon: during a storm the shallow waters were driven back by a *strong east wind* (v. 21), making it possible for the Israelites to cross on foot. Egyptian chariots, however, were mired in the mud and engulfed by the returning waters. Tradition heightened the miracle by attributing it to Moses' wonder-working rod (vv. 16,21a,26-27) and by saying that the waters stood up like walls (vv. 22b,29b).

15.1-21: Two songs of praise which celebrate the LORD's deliverance of his people. 1: The song of Moses (vv. 1-18) is introduced by quoting the ancient song of Miriam (v. 21). 2: See

- ³ The LORD is a man of war;
the LORD is his name.
- ⁴ "Pharaoh's chariots and his host he
cast into the sea;
and his picked officers are sunk in
the Red Sea.
- ⁵ The floods cover them;
they went down into the depths
like a stone.
- ⁶ Thy right hand, O LORD, glorious
in power,
thy right hand, O LORD, shatters
the enemy.
- ⁷ In the greatness of thy majesty thou
overthrowest thy adversaries;
thou sendest forth thy fury, it
consumes them like stubble.
- ⁸ At the blast of thy nostrils the
waters piled up,
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart
of the sea.
- ⁹ The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I
will overtake,
I will divide the spoil, my desire
shall have its fill of them.
I will draw my sword, my hand
shall destroy them.'
- ¹⁰ Thou didst blow with thy wind,
the sea covered them;
they sank as lead in the mighty
waters.
- ¹¹ "Who is like thee, O LORD, among
the gods?
Who is like thee, majestic in
holiness,
terrible in glorious deeds, doing
wonders?
- ¹² Thou didst stretch out thy right
hand,
the earth swallowed them.
- ¹³ "Thou hast led in thy steadfast love
the people whom thou hast
redeemed,
thou hast guided them by thy
strength to thy holy abode.
- ¹⁴ The peoples have heard, they
tremble;
pangs have seized on the
inhabitants of Philistia.
- ¹⁵ Now are the chiefs of Edom
dismayed;
the leaders of Moab, trembling
seizes them;
all the inhabitants of Canaan have
melted away.
- ¹⁶ Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of thy
arm, they are as still as a stone,
till thy people, O LORD, pass by,
till the people pass by whom thou
hast purchased.
- ¹⁷ Thou wilt bring them in, and plant
them on thy own mountain,
the place, O LORD, which thou
hast made for thy abode,
the sanctuary, O LORD, which thy
hands have established.
- ¹⁸ The LORD will reign for ever and
ever."
- ¹⁹ For when the horses of Phar-
aoh with his chariots and his horse-
men went into the sea, the LORD
brought back the waters of the sea
upon them; but the people of Israel
walked on dry ground in the midst of
the sea. ²⁰ Then Miriam, the proph-

14.13–14 n. *My father's God* refers to "the God of the fathers" (3.6). **3:** *A man of war* (Ps.24.8) is a metaphor derived from Israel's ancient practice of holy war. It expressed to Israel the LORD's dynamic action in history (14.14,25). **4–10:** A recital of the LORD's mighty deed at the Sea (see Ps.78.12–13). The imagery of a thunderstorm dominates the poet's thought (Ps.77.16–19). **11:** The LORD's *glorious deeds* in history demonstrate that he is incomparable and absolutely sovereign *among the gods* who compose his heavenly council (Pss.77.13; 82.1; 86.8; 89.7–8). **13–17:** The LORD's guidance of his people into Canaan. **13:** *Thy holy abode* refers to Canaan (compare Ps.78.54). **14:** *Philistia* was settled by the Philistines (see Gen.21.32 n.) about 1175 B.C.; hence the poem was written after that event. **15:** See Num.20.18–21; 21.13. **17:** The *sanctuary* is usually identified with the temple on Mount Zion (Ps.78.68–69), which would date the poem in its final form after Solomon. **19–21:** Miriam's victory dance. **20:** Miriam (Num.12.1–15; 20.1; 26.59) is called a *prophetess* (compare Jg.4.4) because of her ecstatic rousing of Israelite devotion to the LORD through song and dance (compare 1 Sam.18.6–7).

etess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. ²¹ And Miriam sang to them:

“Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.”

²² Then Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur; they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. ²³ When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah. ²⁴ And the people murmured against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” ²⁵ And he cried to the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the LORD^v made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he proved them, ²⁶ saying, “If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD, your healer.”

²⁷ Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the water.

16 They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of

Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. ² And the whole congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, ³ and said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your murmurings against the LORD. For what are we, that you murmur against us?” ⁸ And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your murmurings which you murmur against him—what are we?

^u That is *Bitterness* ^v Heb *he*

21: The Song of Miriam, one of the oldest poetic couplets in the Old Testament, was probably composed by an eyewitness of the event.

15.22–16.36: Crises in the wilderness. In times of need, when faith was put to the test, Israel perceived signs of the LORD’s care and protection. **22:** *The wilderness of Shur*, identified with the wilderness of Etham in Num.33.8, was on the border of Egypt. **24:** Israel’s continual murmuring in the wilderness is a dominant theme of the tradition (16.2–3; 17.3; 32.1–4,25; Num.11.4–6; 12.1–2; 14.2–3; 16.13–14; 20.2–13; 21.4–5). **25:** It was believed that the leaves or bark of certain trees had magical properties for sweetening or “healing” water (2 Kg.2.21). **26:** *Diseases*, i.e. the Egyptian plagues. *Your healer*, Num.21.4–9; Dt.7.15; Ps.103.3. **16.1–36:** The provision of food in the wilderness. **1:** *The wilderness of Sin* (17.1; Num.33.11–12), probably on the Sinaitic Peninsula. **3:** The murmuring wanderers preferred the seasoned food of the *fleshpots of Egypt* to the precarious freedom of the wilderness. **4:** *Prove*, i.e. test their faith by providing only a *portion* sufficient for one day (see Dt.8.3,16; Mt.6.11). **5:** See vv. 22–30. **6–7:** *At evening* when the quails come; *in the morning* when the manna is found (vv. 8,12). In the priestly view, *the glory of the LORD* was an envelope of light (associated with the pillar of cloud and fire; see 13.21–22 n.) which veiled his being. Though men could not see God they could behold the

Your murmurings are not against us but against the LORD."

9 And Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your murmurings.'"

¹⁰ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² "I have heard the murmurings of the people of Israel; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

¹³ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning dew lay round about the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather of it, every man of you, as much as he can eat; you shall take an omer apiece, according to the number of the persons whom each of you has in his tent.'"

¹⁷ And the people of Israel did so; they gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸ But when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; each gathered according to what he could eat. ¹⁹ And Moses said to them, "Let no man leave any of it till the morning." ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with

them. ²¹ Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

²² On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers apiece; and when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, ²³ he said to them, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay by to be kept till the morning.'"

²⁴ So they laid it by till the morning, as Moses bade them; and it did not become foul, and there were no worms in it. ²⁵ Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. ²⁶ Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is a sabbath, there will be none." ²⁷ On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, and they found none. ²⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹ See! The LORD has given you the sabbath, therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days; remain every man of you in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.

³¹ Now the house of Israel called its name manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. ³² And Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'"

³³ And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar, and
w Or "It is manna." Heb *man hu*

glory which signified his presence (40.34; Num.14.10b,22; 16.19; Ezek.11.23). 9-10: Before the LORD, see vv. 33-34 n. 13-22: An early tradition concerning the provision of bread (v. 15). 13: On the quails, see Num.11.1-35. 14: The description here (see also v. 31 and Num.11.7-9) corresponds fairly closely to the "honey-dew" excretion of two scale-insects which feed on the twigs of the tamarisk tree. 15: The name of the food, *manna* (v. 31), is explained by an expression meaning "What is it?" For men of faith the answer was that the natural phenomenon was bread which the LORD has given. 22-36: The provision of manna is the occasion for the insertion

put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the LORD, to be kept throughout your generations.”³⁴ As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony, to be kept.³⁵ And the people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land; they ate the manna, till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

³⁶ (An omer is the tenth part of an ephah.)

17 All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Reph’idim; but there was no water for the people to drink.² Therefore the people found fault with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you find fault with me? Why do you put the LORD to the proof?”³ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”⁴ So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand the rod with which you struck the Nile, and go.⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall

strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah^x and Mer’ibah,^y because of the faultfinding of the children of Israel, and because they put the LORD to the proof by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

8 Then came Am’alek and fought with Israel at Reph’idim.⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out, fight with Am’alek; tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.”¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Am’alek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.¹¹ Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand, Am’alek prevailed.¹² But Moses’ hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.¹³ And Joshua mowed down Am’alek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 And the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance

^x That is *Proof*

^y That is *Contention*

of priestly teaching concerning the sabbath, *a day of solemn rest* (31.15; 35.2). **33-34:** *Before the LORD*, i.e. before the ark. In priestly tradition the ark is sometimes designated by its chief contents, *the Testimony* or tablets of law (27.21; Lev.16.13; Num.17.4).

17.1-16: *Other trying experiences in the wilderness.* **1-7:** Israel’s thirst was quenched with water from the rock (compare Num.20.2-13). **1:** *By stages*, see Num.33.1-49. **2-3:** See 15.24 n. *Put the LORD to proof*, i.e. challenged him to show that he was in their midst (v. 7b). **6:** Water lies below the limestone surface in the region of Sinai. **7:** The place is named both *Massah* from the Hebrew verb “test” and *Meribah* from the verb “find fault”—names which became memorials of Israel’s faithlessness (Dt.6.16; 9.22; 33.8; Ps.95.8). Meribah was one of the springs at Kadesh (Num.20.13; 27.14; Dt.32.51). Marah (15.23) and Massah were evidently springs at the same oasis. Some traditions in 15.23-18.27 come from this oasis south of Beer-sheba (see Num.13.26 n.). **8-15:** The battle with the Amalekites. **8:** The Amalekites, a fierce desert tribe, claimed control of the wilderness in the region of Kadesh (Gen.14.7; Num.13.29; 14.25). **9-13:** *Choose for us men* implies holy war (v. 16) with a select group (compare Jg. ch. 7). The young warrior, Joshua, here mentioned for the first time, was at the head of the Israelite army. Moses, however, led the battle from a hilltop and ensured victory by the power of his rod and outstretched arms and perhaps by the power of the curse (Num.22.5-6). **10:** *Hur*, elsewhere mentioned only in 24.14. **14:** *Utterly blot out*, i.e. the foe will be subjected to the sacrificial ban,

of Am'alek from under heaven." ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD is my banner, ¹⁶ saying, "A hand upon the banner of the LORD!^z The LORD will have war with Am'alek from generation to generation."

18 Jethro, the priest of Mid'ian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. ² Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zippo'rah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away, ³ and her two sons, of whom the name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner^a in a foreign land"), ⁴ and the name of the other, Elie'zer^b (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"). ⁵ And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. ⁶ And when one told Moses, "Lo,^c your father-in-law Jethro is coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her," ⁷ Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare, and went into the tent. ⁸ Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them in the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. ⁹ And Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done to Israel, in

that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

¹⁰ And Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh. ¹¹ Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because he delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians,^d when they dealt arrogantly with them." ¹² And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, offered^e a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

¹³ On the morrow Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand about you from morning till evening?" ¹⁵ And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; ¹⁶ when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God and his decisions." ¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You and the people with you will wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to perform it alone. ¹⁹ Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and

^z Cn: Heb obscure

^a Heb *ger*

^b Heb *Eli*, my God, *ezer*, help

^c Sam Gk Syr: Heb *I*

^d Transposing the last clause of v. 10 to v. 11

^e Syr Tg Vg: Heb *took*

a practice of holy war. **16:** The bitter feud with Amalek persisted (Num.24.20; Dt.25.17-19; 1 Sam.15.7-8; 27.8; ch. 30) until the foe was exterminated during the reign of Hezekiah (1 Chr.4.41-43).

18.1-27: Jethro's visit. The priest of Midian celebrated a sacred meal and counseled Moses about the administration of law. **1:** *Jethro*, see 2.18 n. **2-4:** Zipporah and her sons (2.21-22) apparently had been sent back from Egypt to Midian. **5:** The narrative is out of order, for Israel reached *the mountain of God* later (19.2). **9-12:** This passage may imply that the priest of Midian was already a worshiper of the LORD (see 3.1 n.). As the priest of the cult, Jethro came to rejoice in the LORD's great deeds and to officiate at a cultic celebration. **12:** *Eat bread*, an allusion to a sacred meal held *before God* (24.9-11). Moses was not invited, perhaps because he had already been initiated into the cult (3.1-6). **13-27:** Jethro's plan for the reorganization of legal administration (compare Dt.1.9-18). **13:** Like a bedouin chief, Moses acted as judge in the people's disputes (2 Sam.15.1-6). **15-16:** *Inquire of God*, i.e. seek a verdict by oracle (Jg.4.

God be with you! You shall represent the people before God, and bring their cases to God; ²⁰ and you shall teach them the statutes and the decisions, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

²¹ Moreover choose able men from all the people, such as fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe; and place such men over the people as rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. ²² And let them judge the people at all times; every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves; so it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

²³ If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

²⁴ So Moses gave heed to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. ²⁵ Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. ²⁶ And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves. ²⁷ Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own country.

19 On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

² And when they set out from Reph'idim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mountain. ³ And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. ⁸ And all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. ⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you for ever."

Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. ¹⁰ And the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments, ¹¹ and be ready by the third day; for

4-5). **21-22:** Moses was to deal with cases without legal precedent which required a special oracle (compare Dt.17.8-13); ordinary cases were to be handled by lay leaders (Num.11.16-22, 24-25) or appointed judges (compare Dt.16.18-20). *Rulers of thousands*, see Num.1.17-46 n.

19.1-25 (20.18-21): The theophany at Sinai. At the sacred mountain the LORD offered to make a covenant with Israel. **2:** *Sinai*, see 3.1 n. **3:** The account assumes that the LORD dwells in heaven, whence he "comes down" (v. 20; 3.8) to the mountain top for meeting with men (24.9-11). Compare the similar view reflected in the Babylonian temple-tower (Gen.11.1-9). **4:** *You have seen what I did*, the background and presupposition of the covenant (see Gen. 17.2 n.) is the LORD's mighty acts of deliverance. *On eagles' wings*, Dt.32.11-12. **5:** On Israel's side, the covenant rests upon a condition, *if you will obey my voice*—an allusion to the covenant laws to be given. *My own possession*, or "treasure," is a metaphor for Israel's special relationship to God. In freedom and grace he chose this people for his own (Dt.7.6; 14.2; 26.18), though all the earth belongs to him (Ex.9.29b). **6:** That which is holy is set apart as belonging to God: thus Israel is to be a *kingdom of priests and a holy nation*, consecrated for his service (see Is.61.6; 1 Pet.2.5,9). **7-8:** Compare 24.7. **9:** This tradition stresses Moses' role as the covenant mediator whom the people are to believe *for ever* (20.19; 24.1-2,9-11). **10-15:** In this tradition all the people are to prepare for participation in the covenant ceremony (24.3-8).

on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹² And you shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, 'Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death; ¹³ no hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." ¹⁴ So Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. ¹⁵ And he said to the people, "Be ready by the third day; do not go near a woman."

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. ¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. ²⁰ And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called

Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. ²¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to gaze and many of them perish. ²² And also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out upon them." ²³ And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for thou thyself didst charge us, saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain, and consecrate it.' " ²⁴ And the LORD said to him, "Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them." ²⁵ So Moses went down to the people and told them.

20 And God spoke all these words, saying,

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but

f Or besides

12: The setting of bounds so that the people do not come near the mountain (v. 21) reflects the ancient view of holiness as a mysterious, threatening power with which the mountain is charged (see 3.6 n.; 2 Sam.6.6-9). No hand may touch the offender who has become affected with the contagion of holiness (Lev.6.27-28). **14-15:** Washing or changing of garments (Gen.35.2) and sexual abstinence (1 Sam.21.4-6) were forms of ceremonial purification. **16-19:** The theophany is portrayed primarily in the imagery of a violent thunderstorm (Jg.5.4-5; Pss.18.8-16; 29.4-9; etc.). This traditional language—"earthquake, wind, and fire" (1 Kg.19.11-13)—depicts the wonder and majesty of God's revelation. **16:** The trumpet (v. 13) was sounded on cultic occasions (2 Sam.6.15).

20.1-17: The Ten Commandments, the epitome of man's duties toward God and his neighbor. **1:** *These words*, i.e. "the ten words" or the Decalogue (34.28; Dt.4.13; 10.4). Originally each commandment was a short utterance (see vv. 13,14,15), lacking the explanatory comments found, e.g. in vv. 5,6,9-11. **2:** Jewish tradition considers this to be the first commandment. Actually it is a preface which summarizes the meaning of the Exodus, thus setting law within the context of God's redemptive action. **3:** The first commandment asserts that for Israel there shall be no other gods, because the LORD is a *jealous God* (v. 5; 34.14) who will tolerate no rivals for his people's devotion. **4-6:** Imageless worship of the LORD made Israel's faith unique in the

showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work;¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates;¹¹ for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

13 "You shall not kill.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's."

18 Now when all the people perceived the thunderings and the lightnings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off,¹⁹ and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."²⁰ And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to prove you, and that the fear of him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin."

21 And the people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.²² And the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven.'²³ You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold.²⁴ An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.²⁵ And if you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones; for if you wield your tool upon it you profane it.²⁶ And you shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be not exposed on it."

ancient world where natural powers were personified and statues of them (animal or human) were worshiped. Some interpreters consider vv. 3-6 as one commandment and divide v. 17 into two commandments. **7:** The third commandment prohibits the misuse of the LORD's name in magic, divination, or false swearing (Lev.19.12). It reflects the ancient view that knowledge of the name could be used to exert magical control (see Gen.32.27,29 n.). **8-11:** Keeping the sabbath *holy* means to observe it as a day separated from others, a segment of time belonging especially to God. **10:** 16.22-30. **11:** Dt.5.15. **12:** 21.15,17; Lev.20.9; Dt.27.16. **13:** This commandment forbids murder (see Gen.9.5,6 n.), not the forms of killing authorized for Israel, e.g. war or capital punishment. **16:** This law demands telling the truth in a law suit involving the neighbor (23.1; Dt.19.15-21; 1 Kg.21.8-14). **17:** Some regard the first sentence as a separate commandment; however, *neighbor's house* probably includes what is enumerated in the second part of the verse: wife, manservant, etc. **18-21:** The conclusion to the theophany scene (ch. 19). The people request that Moses be the covenant mediator (see 19.9 n.) so that they need not hear God's law directly (compare Dt.5.4).

20.22-23.33: The Covenant Code. These laws are largely neutral in regard to Israelite faith and presuppose a settled agricultural society. They reflect a situation after Israel's invasion of Canaan, when prevailing laws were borrowed and adapted to the covenant tradition. **22-26:** Cultic regulations. **23:** See 20.4-6 n. **24-26:** The Israelite altar, in contrast to pagan models, is to be the simplest kind and is to be built wherever the LORD *causes his name to be remembered*,

21 "Now these are the ordinances which you shall set before them. ² When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing. ³ If he comes in single, he shall go out single; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. ⁴ If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's and he shall go out alone. ⁵ But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' ⁶ then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for life.

⁷ "When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. ⁸ If she does not please her master, who has designated her^g for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed; he shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt faithlessly with her. ⁹ If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter. ¹⁰ If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights. ¹¹ And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.

¹² "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death. ¹³ But if

he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee. ¹⁴ But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him treacherously, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die.

¹⁵ "Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death.

¹⁶ "Whoever steals a man, whether he sells him or is found in possession of him, shall be put to death.

¹⁷ "Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.

¹⁸ "When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and the man does not die but keeps his bed, ¹⁹ then if the man rises again and walks abroad with his staff, he that struck him shall be clear; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall have him thoroughly healed.

²⁰ "When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be punished. ²¹ But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be punished; for the slave is his money.

²² "When men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall^h be fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. ²³ If

^g Another reading is *so that he has not designated her*
^h Heb *he shall*

i.e. chooses to reveal himself. Contrast the reform demanded in Dt.12.5-14. **21.1-11:** The rights of a slave (compare Dt.15.12-18). **1:** *Ordinances* refers to laws formulated (usually in the third person) to deal with various cases, in contrast to the apodictic or unconditional law of the Israelite theocracy (e.g. the Decalogue). These case laws reflect the agricultural way of life in Canaan (e.g. 22.5-6) and are similar in style and content to other legal codes of the ancient Near East. **2:** *Hebrew*, see Gen.10.21-31 n. An Israelite could go into servitude because of debts (Ex.22.1; Lev.25.39; 2 Kg.4.1). **6:** *To God*, i.e. the legal act had to be performed at the sacred doorpost of the house (see 12.7 n.), perhaps in the presence of the household gods (Gen.31.19). **7-11:** The rights of a female slave or concubine (compare Dt.15.12,17). **8:** *Redeemed*, i.e. by a relative or another buyer who pays the purchase price.

21.12-32: Laws protecting human beings. 12-14: A distinction is drawn between intentional and unintentional murder. As protection from the swift justice of the blood-avenger, the manslayer is guaranteed asylum (Num.35.12; Dt.4.41-43; 19.1-13; Jos. ch. 20), so that the case may be adjudicated soberly by legal authorities. The asylum in ancient times was at the altar (1 Kg.2.28-34). **17:** The curse, according to ancient belief, released an inexorable power (Num. 22.6), thus making it as serious to curse parents as to strike them. **22-25:** This *lex talionis* (see Lev.24.20 n.) was not an expression of vengeance but a limitation upon measureless vengeance.

any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

26 "When a man strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys it, he shall let the slave go free for the eye's sake. ²⁷ If he knocks out the tooth of his slave, male or female, he shall let the slave go free for the tooth's sake.

28 "When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be clear. ²⁹ But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. ³⁰ If a ransom is laid on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid upon him. ³¹ If it gores a man's son or daughter, he shall be dealt with according to this same rule. ³² If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

33 "When a man leaves a pit open, or when a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or an ass falls into it, ³⁴ the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to its owner, and the dead beast shall be his.

35 "When one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the price of it; and the dead beast also they shall divide. ³⁶ Or if it is known that the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall pay ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his.

22ⁱ "If a man steals an ox or a

shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.^j He shall make restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. ⁴ If the stolen beast is found alive in his possession, whether it is an ox or an ass or a sheep, he shall pay double.

^{2k} "If a thief is found breaking in, and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him; ³ but if the sun has risen upon him, there shall be bloodguilt for him.

5 "When a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed over, or lets his beast loose and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best in his own field and in his own vineyard.

6 "When fire breaks out and catches in thorns so that the stacked grain or the standing grain or the field is consumed, he that kindled the fire shall make full restitution.

7 "If a man delivers to his neighbor money or goods to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, then, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. ⁸ If the thief is not found, the owner of the house shall come near to God, to show whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor's goods.

9 "For every breach of trust, whether it is for ox, for ass, for sheep, for clothing, or for any kind of lost thing, of which one says, 'This is it,' the case of both parties shall come before God; he whom God shall condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.

10 "If a man delivers to his neighbor an ass or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep, and it dies or is hurt or is driven away, without any one seeing it, ¹¹ an oath by the LORD shall be be-

ⁱ Ch 21.37 in Heb

^j Restoring the second half of verse 3 with 4 to their place immediately following verse 1

^k Ch 22.1 in Heb

21.33-22.17: Laws dealing with property. 33-36: These laws establish responsibility in cases of carelessness. **22:1-4:** Case laws regulating stealing. **2-3:** These verses may mean that if the invader is caught in the act (at night) he may be slain with impunity, but if he is slain in broad daylight there is blood guilt. **5-6:** Cases of neglect. **7-15:** Cases involving trusteeship. **9: Before God** (v. 8), i.e. to the sanctuary (possibly to the doorpost; 21.6) for an oracular decision or the

tween them both to see whether he has not put his hand to his neighbor's property; and the owner shall accept the oath, and he shall not make restitution. ¹² But if it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to its owner. ¹³ If it is torn by beasts, let him bring it as evidence; he shall not make restitution for what has been torn.

¹⁴ "If a man borrows anything of his neighbor, and it is hurt or dies, the owner not being with it, he shall make full restitution. ¹⁵ If the owner was with it, he shall not make restitution; if it was hired, it came for its hire.¹

¹⁶ "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall give the marriage present for her, and make her his wife. ¹⁷ If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equivalent to the marriage present for virgins.

¹⁸ "You shall not permit a sorceress to live.

¹⁹ "Whoever lies with a beast shall be put to death.

²⁰ "Whoever sacrifices to any god, save to the LORD only, shall be utterly destroyed.

²¹ "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. ²² You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. ²³ If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry; ²⁴ and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

²⁵ "If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall

not be to him as a creditor, and you shall not exact interest from him. ²⁶ If ever you take your neighbor's garment in pledge, you shall restore it to him before the sun goes down; ²⁷ for that is his only covering, it is his mantle for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

²⁸ "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

²⁹ "You shall not delay to offer from the fulness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses.

"The first-born of your sons you shall give to me. ³⁰ You shall do likewise with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day you shall give it to me.

³¹ "You shall be men consecrated to me; therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall cast it to the dogs.

23 "You shall not utter a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man, to be a malicious witness. ² You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; nor shall you bear witness in a suit, turning aside after a multitude, so as to pervert justice; ³ nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his suit.

⁴ "If you meet your enemy's ox or his ass going astray, you shall bring it back to him. ⁵ If you see the ass of one who hates you lying under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it, you shall help him to lift it up.^m

1 Or it is reckoned in (Heb comes into) its hire
m Gk: Heb obscure

sacred oath (v. 11; 1 Kg.8.31-32). **16-17:** This law is included here because it deals with a financial matter, the *marriage present* (Dt.22.29). Laws concerning sexual relations are found in Dt.22.13-30.

22.18-23.9: Miscellaneous social and cultic laws. The laws of vv. 18-20 (compare 21.12,15-17) are in the unconditional style of the Decalogue. **20:** Compare 20.3; Dt.13.12-18. **21-27:** Israel's God is the protector of the legally defenseless: the stranger (sojourner), orphan, widow, and poor. **25:** Being a farming people, Israel frowned upon the mercantile way of life (Hos.12.7-8) and specifically upon the exaction of interest from a fellow-Israelite (Lev.25.35-38). **26:** A loan with a garment as security could only be for the day, lest a poor man suffer (Dt.24.6,17; Am.2.6). **28:** Lev.24.15-16; 2 Sam.16.9; 1 Kg.2.8-9; 21.10. **29-30:** See 13.2 n. **31:** Flesh torn by beasts was regarded as unclean because it was not properly drained of blood (Lev.7.24; 17.15). **23.1-9:** Laws expounding Israel's sense of justice. **4-5:** Justice extends even to helping *your enemy* (Dt.22.1-4).

6 "You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his suit. ⁷ Keep far from a false charge, and do not slay the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. ⁸ And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

9 "You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

10 "For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; ¹¹ but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild beasts may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

12 "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your ass may have rest, and the son of your bond-maid, and the alien, may be refreshed.

¹³ Take heed to all that I have said to you; and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let such be heard out of your mouth.

14 "Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me. ¹⁵ You shall keep the feast of unleavened bread; as I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed.

¹⁶ You shall keep the feast of harvest, of the first fruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the

field the fruit of your labor. ¹⁷ Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God.

18 "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, or let the fat of my feast remain until the morning.

19 "The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

"You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

20 "Behold, I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. ²¹ Give heed to him and hearken to his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him.

22 "But if you hearken attentively to his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

23 "When my angel goes before you, and brings you in to the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, ²⁴ you shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces. ²⁵ You shall serve the LORD your God, and Iⁿ will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you. ²⁶ None shall cast her young or be barren in your land; I will fulfil the number of your days. ²⁷ I will send my terror before you, and will throw into confusion all

n Gk Vg: Heb he

23.10-19: A cultic calendar (34.18-26; Lev.23.1-44; Dt.16.1-17). **10-11:** See Lev.25.2-7. **12:** Here the observance of the sabbath is based upon humanitarian concern (compare 20.11). **14-17:** This law reflects the practice of making a pilgrimage to the central sanctuary of the tribal confederacy (1 Sam.1.3,21). **15:** *Empty-handed*, i.e. without a gift of the first fruits of the barley harvest. **16:** The *feast of harvest*, i.e. the feast of weeks (or pentecost, see Lev.23.15-21 n.) which was celebrated at the time of the wheat harvest (June). The third feast, the *feast of ingathering*, or feast of booths, was celebrated at the end of the year (autumn), according to the old agricultural calendar (see 12.2 n.), when fruit, grapes, and olives were harvested. **17:** According to ancient practice, men were the chief participants in the cult (34.23; see 10.7-11 n.). **18-19:** 34.25-26. The prohibition against seething a kid in its mother's milk (Dt.14.21) is a protest against a Canaanite method of preparing a sacrifice.

23.20-33: The conclusion to the Covenant Code (see 20.22). **20-21:** The *angel* is the LORD

the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. ²⁸ And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out Hivite, Canaanite, and Hittite from before you. ²⁹ I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. ³⁰ Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you are increased and possess the land. ³¹ And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. ³² You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. ³³ They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

24 And he said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abi'hu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship afar off. ² Moses alone shall come near to the LORD; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him."

³ Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered

with one voice, and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do."

⁴ And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. ⁶ And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. ⁷ Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." ⁸ And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

⁹ Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abi'hu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. ¹¹ And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

¹² The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait

himself (14.19; see Gen.16.7 n.). On *the name*, see Gen.32.27 n. **27-28:** The victory will be the LORD's. *Terror*, Gen.35.5. It is not clear whether the *hornets* (Dt.7.20; Jos.24.12) are meant literally or figuratively.

24.1-18: The ceremony of covenant ratification. **1-2:** This tradition is continued in vv. 9-11. *Moses alone*, an indication of Moses' special role as covenant mediator (19.9; 20.19). **3-8:** The first version of the covenant ceremony stresses the people's participation (19.10-15). **3:** *The words*, i.e. the Decalogue; *the ordinances*, i.e. the laws of the Covenant Code (see 21.1 n.). **4:** The participation of all the people is symbolized by *twelve pillars*, one for each tribe. **5:** On the types of sacrifice, see Lev. chs. 1 and 3. **6-8:** The ritual dramatizes the uniting of the two parties: the LORD, whose presence is represented by the altar, and the people. Compare the ancient covenant ceremony found in Gen. ch. 15. **7:** *The book of the covenant* (Jos.24.25-26) apparently contained the covenant laws, here tacitly identified with *the words and the ordinances* (v. 3). **8:** *The blood of the covenant* (compare Mt.26.28; 1 Cor.11.25) reflects the ancient view that blood was efficacious in establishing community between God and man (see Lev.1.5 n.). **9-11:** The second version of the covenant ceremony (continuing vv. 1-2). **9:** The people did not take part but were represented by the seventy *elders* or *chief men*. Moses, the covenant mediator, was accompanied by the priestly family, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu (6.14-25; Lev. 10.1-3). **10:** The leaders did not see God directly; they saw only the lower part of his heavenly throne-room—the sapphire pavement (the firmament) above which the LORD was enthroned (compare Is.6.1; Ezek.1.1,26-28). **11:** Unharmful by divine holiness (see 3.6 n.), the leaders

there; and I will give you the tables of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.”¹³ So Moses rose with his servant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God.¹⁴ And he said to the elders, “Tarry here for us, until we come to you again; and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a cause, let him go to them.”

15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.¹⁶ The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.¹⁸ And Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

25 The LORD said to Moses,² “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me an offering; from every man whose heart makes him willing you shall receive the offering for me.³ And this is the offering which you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze,⁴ blue and purple and scarlet stuff and

fine twined linen, goats’ hair,⁵ tanned rams’ skins, goatskins, acacia wood,⁶ oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense,⁷ onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.⁹ According to all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

10 “They shall make an ark of acacia wood; two cubits and a half shall be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height.¹¹ And you shall overlay it with pure gold, within and without shall you overlay it, and you shall make upon it a molding of gold round about.¹² And you shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it.¹³ You shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.¹⁴ And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark by them.¹⁵ The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.¹⁶ And you shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you.¹⁷ Then you shall make a mercy seat^o

o Or cover

partook of the covenant meal (18.12). **12-14:** A separate tradition about the gift of the *tables of stone* on which the Decalogue was written (32.15; 34.28; Dt.9.9,11,15). **14:** 18.16. This verse sets the stage for the episode of ch. 32. *Hur*, see 17.10 n. **15-18:** This theophany introduces the priestly material of chs. 25-31, which has replaced the early tradition about Moses making the ark and depositing therein the tables of law (Dt.10.1-11). *The glory*, see 16.6-7 n.

25.1-40: The ark, the table, and the lampstand. 1-9: The request for a free-will offering for making the tabernacle and its equipment (35.30-35). **7: The ephod and the breastplate**, 28.6-12, 13-30. **8: A sanctuary**, i.e. a tabernacle, will be the sign that God, the heavenly LORD, is present among his people. **10-22:** Specifications for the ark. In the following sections, the priestly writer moves from the center to the periphery; i.e. he begins with the most important item, the ark, and moves outward to the court. Comparable to ancient Arabic palladia, the ark was a portable wooden chest which served to guide Israel in wandering (Num.10.33), to lead in war (Num. 10.35-36), and to be a medium for oracles (1 Sam. ch. 3). It was regarded as a throne-seat above which the LORD was invisibly enthroned (1 Sam.4.4; 2 Sam.6.2; 2 Kg.19.15). In contrast to the tent of meeting (33.7-9), it signified the divine nearness. Constructed by Moses himself, according to tradition (Dt.10.3), it was stationed at Shiloh during the days of the tribal confederacy (1 Sam. chs. 3-6) and was eventually brought by David to Jerusalem (2 Sam. ch. 6). **10:** The dimensions are about 45 × 27 × 27 inches. **16: The testimony**, i.e. the tables of law (24.12). Hence the chest is called “the ark of the testimony” (v. 22) in view of its chief contents. **17:** The *mercy seat* (Lev.16.2,13-15) was the cover of the ark. As the footstool of the LORD’s

of pure gold; two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. ¹⁸ And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹ Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end; of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. ²⁰ The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. ²¹ And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark; and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. ²² There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you of all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

²³ And you shall make a table of acacia wood; two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. ²⁴ You shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold around it. ²⁵ And you shall make around it a frame a handbreadth wide, and a molding of gold around the frame. ²⁶ And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. ²⁷ Close to the frame the rings shall lie, as holders for the poles to carry the table. ²⁸ You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these. ²⁹ And you shall make

its plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to pour libations; of pure gold you shall make them. ³⁰ And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me always.

³¹ "And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The base and the shaft of the lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its cups, its capitals, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it; ³² and there shall be six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; ³³ three cups made like almonds, each with capital and flower, on one branch, and three cups made like almonds, each with capital and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand; ³⁴ and on the lampstand itself four cups made like almonds, with their capitals and flowers, ³⁵ and a capital of one piece with it under each pair of the six branches going out from the lampstand. ³⁶ Their capitals and their branches shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it one piece of hammered work of pure gold. ³⁷ And you shall make the seven lamps for it; and the lamps shall be set up so as to give light upon the space in front of it. ³⁸ Its snuffers and their trays shall be of pure gold. ³⁹ Of a talent of pure gold shall it be made, with all these utensils. ⁴⁰ And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain.

26 "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains

throne (1 Chr.28.2; Ps.132.7), it was regarded as the place where the LORD meets the priestly representative of the people (v. 22). **18-20:** In antiquity cherubim (see Gen.3.24 n.) were adornments of a throne. **23-30:** The table for the holy bread and the sacred vessels (1 Kg.7.48). **30:** The *bread of the Presence* or "holy bread" (1 Sam.21.4,6) was bread placed before God as a sacrificial offering (Num.4.7; Lev.24.5-9; 1 Chr.9.32; Mt.12.4). **31-40:** The seven-branched golden candlestick was to illumine the interior of the holy place (30.7-8; 1 Kg.7.49). **40:** Ancients believed that earthly temples and their cultic equipment were made according to the *pattern* or prototype of heavenly models (v. 9; 26.30; 27.8).

26.1-37: The *pattern of the tabernacle*. This account blends the ancient tradition of the tent of meeting (33.7-11; Num.11.16-17,24-30) and the later view of the structure and adornments of Solomon's temple (1 Kg. ch. 6; Ezek. chs. 40-43). Hence it is called "the tabernacle of the tent of meeting" (39.32; 40.6,29). **1-6:** The interior was to consist of ten richly decorated cur-

of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet stuff; with cherubim skillfully worked shall you make them.

² The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains shall have one measure. ³ Five curtains shall be coupled to one another; and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another. ⁴ And you shall make loops of blue on the edge of the outmost curtain in the first set; and likewise you shall make loops on the edge of the outmost curtain in the second set. ⁵ Fifty loops you shall make on the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that is in the second set; the loops shall be opposite one another. ⁶ And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to the other with the clasps, that the tabernacle may be one whole.

⁷ "You shall also make curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; eleven curtains shall you make. ⁸ The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains shall have the same measure. ⁹ And you shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and the sixth curtain you shall double over at the front of the tent. ¹⁰ And you shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outmost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain which is outmost in the second set.

¹¹ "And you shall make fifty clasps of bronze, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be one whole. ¹² And the part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. ¹³ And the cubit on the one side, and

the cubit on the other side, of what remains in the length of the curtains of the tent shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and that side, to cover it. ¹⁴ And you shall make for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins.

¹⁵ "And you shall make upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. ¹⁶ Ten cubits shall be the length of a frame, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each frame. ¹⁷ There shall be two tenons in each frame, for fitting together; so shall you do for all the frames of the tabernacle. ¹⁸ You shall make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side; ¹⁹ and forty bases of silver you shall make under the twenty frames, two bases under one frame for its two tenons, and two bases under another frame for its two tenons; ²⁰ and for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side twenty frames, ²¹ and their forty bases of silver, two bases under one frame, and two bases under another frame; ²² and for the rear of the tabernacle westward you shall make six frames. ²³ And you shall make two frames for corners of the tabernacle in the rear; ²⁴ they shall be separate beneath, but joined at the top, at the first ring; thus shall it be with both of them; they shall form the two corners. ²⁵ And there shall be eight frames, with their bases of silver, sixteen bases; two bases under one frame, and two bases under another frame.

²⁶ "And you shall make bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle, ²⁷ and five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the side of the tabernacle at the rear westward. ²⁸ The middle bar, halfway up the frames, shall pass

tains (compare 1 Kg.6.29). 7-14: The oldest phase of the priestly tradition recalls the ancient tent made of goat's hair (v. 7) and reddened ram's skins (v. 14), like the ancient, Arabic red-leather shrines which were also supported on desert acacia wood. The ancient tradition concerning the tent is combined with the design of Solomon's temple, with the result that the tent is conceived as a covering for the tabernacle, i.e. *a tent over the tabernacle* (v. 7; 39.33; 40.19). 15-30: The wooden framework is about 45 × 45 × 15 ft (1 Kg.6.2).

through from end to end. ²⁹ You shall overlay the frames with gold, and shall make their rings of gold for holders for the bars; and you shall overlay the bars with gold. ³⁰ And you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for it which has been shown you on the mountain.

31 "And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; in skilled work shall it be made, with cherubim; ³² and you shall hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, upon four bases of silver. ³³ And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in thither within the veil; and the veil shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy. ³⁴ You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. ³⁵ And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table; and you shall put the table on the north side.

36 "And you shall make a screen for the door of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. ³⁷ And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them.

27 "You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad; the altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. ² And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. ³ You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and firepans; all its utensils you shall make of

bronze. ⁴ You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze; and upon the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. ⁵ And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net shall extend halfway down the altar. ⁶ And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze; ⁷ and the poles shall be put through the rings, so that the poles shall be upon the two sides of the altar, when it is carried. ⁸ You shall make it hollow, with boards; as it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.

9 "You shall make the court of the tabernacle. On the south side the court shall have hangings of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side; ¹⁰ their pillars shall be twenty and their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. ¹¹ And likewise for its length on the north side there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, their pillars twenty and their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. ¹² And for the breadth of the court on the west side there shall be hangings for fifty cubits, with ten pillars and ten bases. ¹³ The breadth of the court on the front to the east shall be fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings for the one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits, with three pillars and three bases. ¹⁵ On the other side the hangings shall be fifteen cubits, with three pillars and three bases. ¹⁶ For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework; it shall have four pillars and with them four bases. ¹⁷ All the pillars around the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of

31-34: The *most holy place* (holy of holies) was to be separated from the *holy place* (sanctuary) by a rich veil, as in Solomon's temple.

27.1-21: The altar and the court. From the tabernacle, the writer turns to the surrounding sacred area. **1-8:** The central object in the court was the altar of burnt offering, where the main sacrificial services took place. In comparison with the crude altar of 20.25, this altar, overlaid with bronze (1 Kg.8.64), indicates a considerable amount of Canaanite influence. **9-19:** The court of the tabernacle was a sacred enclosure (150 × 75 feet), a common feature of

silver, and their bases of bronze. ¹⁸ The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, the breadth fifty, and the height five cubits, with hangings of fine twined linen and bases of bronze. ¹⁹ All the utensils of the tabernacle for every use, and all its pegs and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze.

20 "And you shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may be set up to burn continually. ²¹ In the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute for ever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel.

28 "Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abi'hu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ² And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. ³ And you shall speak to all who have ability, whom I have endowed with an able mind, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood. ⁴ These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a girdle; they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests.

5 "They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. ⁶ And they shall make the ephod

of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and of fine twined linen, skilfully worked. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder-pieces attached to its two edges, that it may be joined together. ⁸ And the skilfully woven band upon it, to gird it on, shall be of the same workmanship and materials, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. ⁹ And you shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰ six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. ¹¹ As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel; you shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree. ¹² And you shall set the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for remembrance. ¹³ And you shall make settings of gold filigree, ¹⁴ and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords; and you shall attach the corded chains to the settings.

15 "And you shall make a breast-piece of judgment, in skilled work; like the work of the ephod you shall make it; of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen shall you make it. ¹⁶ It shall be square and double, a span its length and a span its breadth. ¹⁷ And you shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; ¹⁸ and the second row an emerald,

ancient temple plans. 20-21: The lamp (25.31-37; Lev.24.1-3) was to burn continually as a sign of God's presence. *The testimony*, see 16.33-34 n.

28.1-43: Priestly vestments. 1-5: Early in Israelite history the tribe of Levi became a priestly class (Gen.49.5-7; Num.1.47-54). Apparently Levites first exercised their priestly office at Kadesh (Dt.33.8-10). Those of Aaron's line (Ex.6.14-25; compare Num.8.5-26; Dt.18.1 n.) are here designated to officiate at the altar of the central shrine (i.e. the tabernacle and later the Jerusalem temple). 6-12: The *ephod* harks back to early cultic practice at the central sanctuary of Shiloh (1 Sam.2.18-19,28; 14.3). Sometimes scorned as an idolatrous object, perhaps a garment for an idol (Jg.8.27; 17.5; 18.4), it is usually thought of as a linen apron worn by a priest (2 Sam.6.14-15) and used in connection with the sacred lot (see v. 30). The engraved stones on each shoulder-piece (vv. 9-12) symbolize the priest's intercessory function on behalf of the twelve tribes (v. 29). 15-30: Hanging from the shoulder-pieces was the *breastpiece of judgment*, a pouch which contained the sacred lots, *Urim and Thummim* (v. 30). The priestly

a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹⁹ and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ²⁰ and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold filigree. ²¹ There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel; they shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. ²² And you shall make for the breastpiece twisted chains like cords, of pure gold; ²³ and you shall make for the breastpiece two rings of gold, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece. ²⁴ And you shall put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece; ²⁵ the two ends of the two cords you shall attach to the two settings of filigree, and so attach it in front to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod. ²⁶ And you shall make two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod. ²⁷ And you shall make two rings of gold, and attach them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at its joining above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. ²⁸ And they shall bind the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may lie upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece shall not come loose from the ephod. ²⁹ So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment upon his heart, when he goes into the holy place, to bring them to continual remembrance before the LORD. ³⁰ And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the LORD; thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.

³¹ "And you shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. ³² It shall have in it an opening for the head, with a woven binding around the opening, like the opening in a garment,^p that it may not be torn. ³³ On its skirts you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, around its skirts, with bells of gold between them, ³⁴ a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, round about on the skirts of the robe. ³⁵ And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before the LORD, and when he comes out, lest he die.

³⁶ "And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.' ³⁷ And you shall fasten it on the turban by a lace of blue; it shall be on the front of the turban. ³⁸ It shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take upon himself any guilt incurred in the holy offering which the people of Israel hallow as their holy gifts; it shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

³⁹ "And you shall weave the coat in checker work of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a girdle embroidered with needlework.

⁴⁰ "And for Aaron's sons you shall make coats and girdles and caps; you shall make them for glory and beauty. ⁴¹ And you shall put them upon Aaron your brother, and upon his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. ⁴² And you shall make for them linen breeches to cover their naked flesh; from the loins to the thighs they shall reach; ⁴³ and they shall be upon Aaron, and

^p The Hebrew word is of uncertain meaning

lot was used to obtain an oracular decision (Lev.8.8; Num.27.21; Dt.33.8; 1 Sam.14.41-42; 23.6-13). **31-34:** A short garment, the blue *robe of the ephod*, was worn under the ephod. The bells were once thought to protect the priest from demonic attack, *lest he die* when he enters the holy place (v. 35). **36-38:** The head piece, a *plate of pure gold* fastened to a turban, symbolizes the regal splendor of the priest (Ezek.21.26; Zech.3.5). **39:** Underneath the blue robe the priest wore a coat or long tunic with sleeves, gathered at the waist with a sash.

upon his sons, when they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy place; lest they bring guilt upon themselves and die. This shall be a perpetual statute for him and for his descendants after him.

29 "Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, ² and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil. You shall make them of fine wheat flour. ³ And you shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, and bring the bull and the two rams. ⁴ You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water. ⁵ And you shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the coat and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastpiece, and gird him with the skillfully woven band of the ephod; ⁶ and you shall set the turban on his head, and put the holy crown upon the turban. ⁷ And you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him. ⁸ Then you shall bring his sons, and put coats on them, ⁹ and you shall gird them with girdles^q and bind caps on them; and the priesthood shall be theirs by a perpetual statute. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

¹⁰ "Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting. Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the bull, ¹¹ and you shall kill the bull before the LORD, at the door of the tent of meeting, ¹² and shall take

part of the blood of the bull and put it upon the horns of the altar with your finger, and the rest of the blood you shall pour out at the base of the altar. ¹³ And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, and the appendage of the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and burn them upon the altar. ¹⁴ But the flesh of the bull, and its skin, and its dung, you shall burn with fire outside the camp; it is a sin offering.

¹⁵ "Then you shall take one of the rams, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram, ¹⁶ and you shall slaughter the ram, and shall take its blood and throw it against the altar round about. ¹⁷ Then you shall cut the ram into pieces, and wash its entrails and its legs, and put them with its pieces and its head, ¹⁸ and burn the whole ram upon the altar; it is a burnt offering to the LORD; it is a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD.

¹⁹ "You shall take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram, ²⁰ and you shall kill the ram, and take part of its blood and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron and upon the tips of the right ears of his sons, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet, and throw the rest of the blood against the altar round about. ²¹ Then you shall take part of the blood that is on the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron and his garments, and upon his sons and his sons' garments with him; and he and his gar-

q Gk: Heb girdles, Aaron and his sons *r* Heb all

29.1-46: The service for the ordination of the priests. See Lev. ch. 8 where these directions are carried out. **1-9:** The anointing of the high priest (Lev.16.32; Ps.133.2) follows the ancient rite of anointing the king's head with oil, thus making him "the LORD's anointed" (1 Sam.24.6; Ps.2.2). Priestly tradition traces the line of the high priesthood from Aaron, to whom the priestly office belongs by a perpetual statute (v. 9b). **10-14:** The sin offering for the priests (Lev.4.1-12). **10:** The laying on of hands signifies identification with the sacrificial victim. **12:** The horns of the altar (27.2) were its most sacred parts (1 Kg.1.50; Am.3.14). On the efficacy of blood for the expiation of sin, see Lev.1.5 n. **15-18:** One of the rams (v. 1), as distinguished from the ram of ordination (v. 22), was for burnt offering (Lev. ch. 1). *Pleasing odor*, see Lev. 1.9 n. **19-34:** The installation sacrifice was essentially a peace offering (Lev. ch. 3). **20:** Touching the blood upon the ears, hands, and feet consecrates the whole person for the office. **24:** Putting

ments shall be holy, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

22 "You shall also take the fat of the ram, and the fat tail, and the fat that covers the entrails, and the appendage of the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of ordination),²³ and one loaf of bread, and one cake of bread with oil, and one wafer, out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before the LORD;²⁴ and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and wave them for a wave offering before the LORD.²⁵ Then you shall take them from their hands, and burn them on the altar in addition to the burnt offering, as a pleasing odor before the LORD; it is an offering by fire to the LORD.

26 "And you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's ordination and wave it for a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion.²⁷ And you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering, and the thigh of the priests' portion, which is waved, and which is offered from the ram of ordination, since it is for Aaron and for his sons.²⁸ It shall be for Aaron and his sons as a perpetual due from the people of Israel, for it is the priests' portion to be offered by the people of Israel from their peace offerings; it is their offering to the LORD.

29 "The holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, to be anointed in them and ordained in them.³⁰ The son who is priest in his place shall wear them seven days, when he comes into the tent of meeting to minister in the holy place.

31 "You shall take the ram of ordination, and boil its flesh in a holy place;³² and Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram and the bread that is in the basket, at the door of the tent of meeting.³³ They shall eat those things with which atonement was made, to ordain and consecrate them, but an outsider shall not eat of them, because they are holy.³⁴ And if any of the flesh for the ordination, or of the bread, remain until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire; it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.

35 "Thus you shall do to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you; through seven days shall you ordain them,³⁶ and every day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement. Also you shall offer a sin offering for the altar, when you make atonement for it, and shall anoint it, to consecrate it.³⁷ Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar, and consecrate it, and the altar shall be most holy; whatever touches the altar shall become holy.

38 "Now this is what you shall offer upon the altar: two lambs a year old day by day continually.³⁹ One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer in the evening;⁴⁰ and with the first lamb a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a libation.⁴¹ And the other lamb you shall offer in the evening, and shall offer with it a cereal offering and its libation, as in the morning, for a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD.⁴² It shall be a continual burnt offering through-

these things in the hands of the priests signified that they were authorized to receive their portions of the offerings (1 Sam.2.12-17). To "fill the hands" (literal Hebrew) was an old expression for investment with priestly prerogatives (Jg.17.5; 1 Kg.13.33). The *wave offering* (vv. 26-28; Lev.7.29-36) refers to the act of moving the sacrifice toward and away from the altar, to symbolize presenting the gift to God and receiving it back as a portion. 31-34: Further instructions for the ordination peace offering. *An outsider*, i.e. a layman. 35-37: The seven day ordination ceremony. Owing to the efficacy of blood (v. 12), the sin offering is for *atonement*, i.e. it produces a "covering" for sin and sanctifies the priest. The offering is also said to make atonement for the altar, i.e. to cleanse and consecrate it with blood (Ezek.43.18-27). In a deeper sense atonement actualizes divine forgiveness and reconciliation (32.30-32). 38-42: The daily burnt offering, compare Num.28.3-8; Ezek.46.13-15. *Tenth measure*, a tenth of an ephah, see Num.

out your generations at the door of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak there to you. ⁴³ There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory; ⁴⁴ I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate, to serve me as priests. ⁴⁵ And I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God. ⁴⁶ And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the LORD their God.

30 "You shall make an altar to burn incense upon; of acacia wood shall you make it. ² A cubit shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth; it shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height; its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³ And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides round about and its horns; and you shall make for it a molding of gold round about. ⁴ And two golden rings shall you make for it; under its molding on two opposite sides of it shall you make them, and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. ⁵ You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. ⁶ And you shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you. ⁷ And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it, ⁸ and when Aaron sets up the lamps in the evening, he shall burn it, a per-

petual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. ⁹ You shall offer no unholy incense thereon, nor burnt offering, nor cereal offering; and you shall pour no libation thereon. ¹⁰ Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year; with the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it once in the year throughout your generations; it is most holy to the LORD."

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, ¹² "When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them. ¹³ Each who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the LORD. ¹⁴ Every one who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the LORD's offering. ¹⁵ The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the LORD's offering to make atonement for yourselves. ¹⁶ And you shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting; that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the LORD, so as to make atonement for yourselves."

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸ "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing. And you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall

15.2-10. **43-46:** God's meeting with his people. **43:** *It*, the door of the tent of meeting (v. 42). *Glory*, see 16.7 n. **45:** See 6.7 n.; 25.8; 40.34.

30.1-31.18: Other priestly matters. **1-10:** The burning of incense was an ancient cultic practice (Is.1.13), probably taken over from the Canaanites. **10:** On atonement for the altar, see 29.36-37. *Once in the year*, i.e. on the day of atonement (Lev. ch. 16). **11-16:** The tax for the support of the sanctuary. **11-12:** The census, reported in Num. ch. 1, was originally for military purposes. Fearing that God's wrath would be manifested against a census (2 Sam. ch. 24), the people paid a fee (compare 2 Chr.24.6,9; Mt.17.24-27) as a *ransom* or *atonement* (v. 16). **13:** *The shekel of the sanctuary* (Lev.5.15; 27.25; Num.3.47; 18.16; Ezek.45.12) based on the older Phoenician or Hebrew measurement, was heavier than the Babylonian shekel used in post-exilic times. Here it is explained that the sanctuary tax is to be paid in the older weight. **17-21:** The laver of bronze (1 Kg.7.38) was for ritual ablutions. **34-38:** The formula

put water in it, ¹⁹ with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. ²⁰ When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. ²¹ They shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die: it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his descendants throughout their generations."

²² Moreover, the LORD said to Moses, ²³ "Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, two hundred and fifty, and of aromatic cane two hundred and fifty, ²⁴ and of cassia five hundred, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin; ²⁵ and you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; a holy anointing oil it shall be. ²⁶ And you shall anoint with it the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, ²⁷ and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, ²⁸ and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils and the laver and its base; ²⁹ you shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them will become holy. ³⁰ And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. ³¹ And you shall say to the people of Israel, 'This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. ³² It shall not be poured upon the bodies of ordinary men, and you shall make no other like it in composition; it is holy, and it shall be holy to you. ³³ Whoever compounds any like it or whoever puts any of it on an outsider shall be cut off from his people.'"

³⁴ And the LORD said to Moses, "Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure

frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), ³⁵ and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy; ³⁶ and you shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you; it shall be for you most holy. ³⁷ And the incense which you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves; it shall be for you holy to the LORD. ³⁸ Whoever makes any like it to use as perfume shall be cut off from his people."

31 The LORD said to Moses, ² "See, I have called by name Bez'alel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, ⁴ to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ⁵ in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every craft. ⁶ And behold, I have appointed with him Oho'liab, the son of Ahis'amach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you: ⁷ the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereon, and all the furnishings of the tent, ⁸ the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, ⁹ and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base, ¹⁰ and the finely worked garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests, ¹¹ and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the holy place. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do."

¹² And the LORD said to Moses, ¹³ "Say to the people of Israel, 'You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout

for the incense, as for the holy oil (vv. 22-23), was a priestly secret. *Stacte*, an oil of myrrh. *Onycha*, a spice from a mollusk found in the Red Sea. *Galbanum*, an aromatic resin from Asiatic plants. *Frankincense*, a fragrant gum resin from certain trees. **31.1-11**: The appointment of craftsmen. *Bezalel*, 1 Chr. 2.18-20. *Oholiab* is otherwise unknown. **12-17**: The sabbath,

your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the sabbath, because it is holy for you; every one who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷ It is a sign for ever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."

18 And he gave to Moses, when he had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

32 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." ² And Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." ³ So all the people took off the rings of gold which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ And he received the gold at their hand, and fashioned it with a

graving tool, and made a molten calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" ⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." ⁶ And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down; for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; ⁸ they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" ⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; ¹⁰ now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation."

11 But Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does thy wrath burn hot against thy people, whom thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?' Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,

anticipated by priestly tradition in 16.22-30, is here formally instituted at Sinai. **18:** A transitional verse which resumes the narrative from 24.18. The inserted block of priestly tradition (chs. 25-31) was supposedly delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai.

32.1-35: The breaking of the covenant. During Moses' absence the rebellious people chose Aaron as their leader and worshiped a golden bull. **1:** Moses stayed on the mountain top forty days and forty nights, a round number for an indefinitely long time (1 Kg.19.8; Mt.4.2). *Gods who shall go before us*, i.e. visible symbols of the divine presence as in pagan idolatry (see 20.4-6 n.). **2-3:** On the golden earrings, see Gen.35.4 n. The *calf*, or young bull, was a symbol of fertility in the nature-religions of the ancient Near East (compare 1 Kg.12.28; Hos.8.5). **6:** The eating and drinking accompanied *the feast to the LORD*, a dedication of the new cultic symbol (2 Sam.6.17-19). **7-14:** Moses' first intercession (Num.14.13-19). **14:** *The*

thy servants, to whom thou didst swear by thine own self, and didst say to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.'"¹⁴ And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people.

15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mountain with the two tables of the testimony in his hands, tables that were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.¹⁶ And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp."¹⁸ But he said, "It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear."¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tables out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.²⁰ And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it upon the water, and made the people of Israel drink it.

21 And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought a great sin upon them?"²² And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn hot; you know the people, that they are set on evil."²³ For they said to me, 'Make us gods, who

shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'²⁴ And I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off'; so they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and there came out this calf."

25 And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to their shame among their enemies),²⁶ then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on the LORD's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.²⁷ And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Put every man his sword on his side, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'²⁸ And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.²⁹ And Moses said, "Today you have ordained yourselves^s for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, that he may bestow a blessing upon you this day."

30 On the morrow Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."³¹ So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people have sinned a great sin; they have made for themselves gods of gold.³² But now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not,

^s Gk Vg See Tg: Heb *ordain yourselves*

LORD repented, i.e. revised his course of action—not capriciously but in a manner consistent with his steadfast purpose (Am.7.3,6). **15:** *Tables of the testimony*, see 25.16 n. **19:** The breaking of the tables symbolized that the covenant relationship had been broken. **20:** Moses subjected the people to a trial by ordeal (Num.5.16-24). Those who suffered ill effects from drinking the water and pulverized metal were regarded as guilty and fell in a plague (v. 35). **21-24:** The rebuke of Aaron (see Num. ch. 12) stands in contrast to his priestly prestige and intercessory role as described in chs. 25-31. **24:** Aaron tries to disclaim responsibility by saying that he did not make the calf: it emerged from the fire by itself. **25-29:** A separate tradition about how the Levites (see 28.1-5 n.) were consecrated to the priesthood (compare Num.25.12-13). Instead of being consecrated by a ritual ceremony (ch. 29), the Levites *ordained themselves* by their zeal, that is, their passionate loyalty to the LORD (1 Kg.19.10; 2 Kg.10.16) despite social or family bonds. **30-35:** Moses' second intercession. **30:** *Make atonement*, i.e. obtain forgiveness

blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”³³ But the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.”³⁴ But now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.”

35 And the LORD sent a plague upon the people, because they made the calf which Aaron made.

33 The LORD said to Moses, “Depart, go up hence, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it.’”² And I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you in the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

4 When the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man put on his ornaments.⁵ For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you.

So now put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what to do with you.’”⁶ Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And every one who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.⁸ Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose up, and every man stood at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the tent.⁹ When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses.¹⁰ And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the door of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, every man at his tent door.¹¹ Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tent.

12 Moses said to the LORD, “See, thou sayest to me, ‘Bring up this people’; but thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’

(v. 32). **32:** *Thy book* is the register of the members of the theocratic community (Ps.69.28; Is.4.3; Dan.12.1; Mal.3.16). **34:** On the *angel*, see Gen.16.7 n.; Ex.23.20.

33.1-23: The LORD's guidance. Moses seeks assurance that the LORD will accompany the people, despite their sin. **1-6:** By sending his angel or alter ego (32.34), the LORD will not forsake his people. He will not, however, accompany the sinful people himself, lest his holiness consume them. **4-6:** The people removed their ornaments as a sign of mourning. **7-11:** An old tradition about the tent of meeting. **7:** *The tent* was portable, like ancient Arabic tent-shrines (see 26.7-14 n.). Unlike the priestly tabernacle which was centrally located (25.8; Num.2.2), the tent was pitched *far off from the camp*. Originally the tent was perhaps both a place of tribal assembly and an oracle-place, both ideas being implied in the term *meeting*. However, it was chiefly a tent of revelation to Moses (Num.11.16-17,24-30; 12.1-8; Dt.31.14-15; compare Ex.29.42-46). *Sought the LORD*, i.e. for oracular decisions (18.15-16). **8-9:** While the ark symbolized the nearness and presence of the LORD (see 25.10-22 n.), the tent signified the LORD's distance and transcendence; hence he used to *descend* from time to time to meet with Moses. In priestly tradition the two views are combined by saying that the ark was placed within the tent of testimony (30.36; Num.9.15; 17.7-8). **11:** Moses' mediatorial role (19.9; 20.19) is indicated by the fact that the LORD used to speak to him *face to face, as a man speaks to his friend* (Num.12.7-8; Dt.34.10-12). Here Joshua, rather than Aaron the priest, is the custodian of the tent. **12-16:** Moses' intercession. **14:** *My presence* (literally, “face”), perhaps

¹³ Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee and find favor in thy sight. Consider too that this nation is thy people.” ¹⁴ And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” ¹⁵ And he said to him, “If thy presence will not go with me, do not carry us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? Is it not in thy going with us, so that we are distinct, I and thy people, from all other people that are upon the face of the earth?”

¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” ¹⁸ Moses said, “I pray thee, show me thy glory.” ¹⁹ And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD’; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live.” ²¹ And the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; ²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; ²³ then I will take away my hand,

and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.”

34 The LORD said to Moses, “Cut two tables of stone like the first; and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which you broke. ² Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. ³ No man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let no flocks or herds feed before that mountain.” ⁴ So Moses cut two tables of stone like the first; and he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand two tables of stone. ⁵ And the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. ⁶ The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” ⁸ And Moses made haste to bow his head toward the earth, and worshiped.

a reference to the ark. Enthroned on the ark, the LORD goes before his people and gives them rest (Num.10.33). **16:** Israel is a unique people because it undertakes a special historical pilgrimage with the LORD as leader (Num.23.9). **17-23:** These verses anticipate the theophany of 34.5-9. **18:** Having asked that God show his *ways* (v. 13) or form of historical action, Moses now asks for more: that he show his *glory*, i.e. the visible radiance and majesty of the Godhead (see 16.7 n.). **19:** The proclamation of the divine name, the LORD (Yahweh; see 3.14 n.), was tantamount to a disclosure of the character or being of God (see Gen.32.27 n.). Divine freedom is emphasized; the LORD acts as he wills to act (compare Rom.9.15). His action, however, is not capricious; but is the expression of his *goodness* (34.6-7). **22:** On the cave or *cleft of the rock*, see 1 Kg.19.9-18. **23:** Although employing bold anthropomorphisms (the LORD’s *hand* and *back*), the story emphasizes that God remains hidden even in the time of revelation.

34.1-35: The renewal of the covenant, symbolized by the rewriting of the commandments. **1-4:** The second tables were to contain *the words that were on the first tables* (24.12-14; compare Dt.10.1-5). However, the rewriting of the commandments gives the narrator the opportunity to introduce a cultic set of laws (vv. 12-26). **5-9:** The theophany is anticipated in 33.17-23. **6-7:** Passing by or before Moses (33.22 n.; compare 1 Kg.19.11-12), the LORD disclosed that he is the God of *steadfast love* (see Gen.24.12 n.), though this does not exclude judgment upon sin. This summary, echoed in various places in the Old Testament (Num.14.18; Neh.9.17,31;

⁹ And he said, "If now I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in the midst of us, although it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thy inheritance."

10 And he said, "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth or in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with you."

11 "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites. ¹² Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it become a snare in the midst of you. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars, and break their pillars, and cut down their Ashe'rim ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they play the harlot after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and one invites you, you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods and make your sons play the harlot after their gods."

17 "You shall make for yourself no molten gods."

18 "The feast of unleavened bread

you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib; for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. ¹⁹ All that opens the womb is mine, all your male^x cattle, the firstlings of cow and sheep. ²⁰ The firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the first-born of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty."

21 "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. ²² And you shall observe the feast of weeks, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. ²³ Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. ²⁴ For I will cast out nations before you, and enlarge your borders; neither shall any man desire your land, when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year."

25 "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left until the morning. ²⁶ The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

27 And the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." ²⁸ And he

^x Gk Theodotion Vg Tg: Heb uncertain

Ps.103.8; Jer.32.18; Jon.4.2), is probably an old cultic confession. **10-28:** This is apparently another tradition about the making of a covenant (v. 10), parallel to that of chs. 20-24. In the present context, however, it is understood as a renewal of the covenant after it was broken by the people (ch. 32). **11-16:** Intolerance of pagan forms of worship was motivated by fear of the seductive power of idolatry (see 23.24). **13:** The *pillars* were upright stones which stood near Baal shrines; the *Asherim* (sacred poles) symbolized Asherah, the mother goddess of Canaanite religion (Jg.2.13). **14:** Religious exclusivism is derived from the fundamental conviction of Mosaic faith; the exclusive claim of Israel's God upon his people's loyalty (20.3). The LORD's *name* (or-character) is *Jealous*, i.e. he will tolerate no rivals for Israel's devotion (20.5; Dt.4.24). **18-26:** A cultic calendar. The laws concerning the three annual feasts (vv. 18,22-23) are paralleled in 23.14-17. On the redemption of the first-born (vv. 19-20), see 13.13 n. **24:** The property will be protected while the men are on pilgrimage to the central sanctuary.

was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.¹

29 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.³⁰ And when Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.³¹ But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them.³² And afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai.³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face;³⁴ but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the people of Israel what he was commanded,³⁵ the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

35 Moses assembled all the congregation of the people of Israel, and said to them, "These are the things which the LORD has commanded you to do. ² Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy sabbath of solemn rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death;³ you shall kindle

no fire in all your habitations on the sabbath day."

4 Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded. ⁵ Take from among you an offering to the LORD; whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the LORD's offering: gold, silver, and bronze; ⁶ blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; goats' hair, ⁷ tanned rams' skins, and goatskins; acacia wood, ⁸ oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁹ and onyx stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

10 "And let every able man among you come and make all that the LORD has commanded: the tabernacle, ¹¹ its tent and its covering, its hooks and its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; ¹² the ark with its poles, the mercy seat, and the veil of the screen; ¹³ the table with its poles and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ¹⁴ the lampstand also for the light, with its utensils and its lamps, and the oil for the light; ¹⁵ and the altar of incense, with its poles, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the door, at the door of the tabernacle; ¹⁶ the altar of burnt offering, with its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils, the laver and its base; ¹⁷ the hangings of the court, its pillars and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸ the pegs of the tabernacle and the pegs of the court, and their cords; ¹⁹ the finely wrought garments for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for

¹ Heb words

25-26: 23.18-19. **27-28:** Moses' special role as covenant mediator (see 19.9 n.) is shown by the fact that the covenant is made with him and, through him, with Israel. *These words*, a reference to the preceding cultic laws. Some have attempted to arrange these into a decalogue (compare v. 28b). Probably, however, the editor has blended together two covenant traditions: one based on the decalogue and the other on this set of ritual laws. **29-35:** According to priestly tradition, the radiant glory of the LORD so transfigured Moses' face (compare Mt.17.1-7) that he had to wear a veil (2 Cor.3.7-18).

Chs. 35-40: The establishment of the cult. This priestly section shows how the instructions given to Moses in chs. 25-31 were carried out. **35.1-3:** See 31.12-17. The sabbath law is placed first so as to restrict work on the tabernacle. **4-29:** An expansion of 25.1-9.

Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests.”

20 Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. ²¹ And they came, every one whose heart stirred him, and every one whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's offering to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. ²² So they came, both men and women; all who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the LORD. ²³ And every man with whom was found blue or purple or scarlet stuff or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins, brought them. ²⁴ Every one who could make an offering of silver or bronze brought it as the LORD's offering; and every man with whom was found acacia wood of any use in the work, brought it. ²⁵ And all women who had ability spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; ²⁶ all the women whose hearts were moved with ability spun the goats' hair. ²⁷ And the leaders brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breast-piece, ²⁸ and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. ²⁹ All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work which the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done, brought it as their freewill offering to the LORD.

30 And Moses said to the people of Israel, “See, the LORD has called by name Bez'alel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³¹ and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, ³² to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, ³³ in cutting stones for setting, and in

carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. ³⁴ And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oho'liab the son of Ahis'amach of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵ He has filled them with ability to do every sort of work done by a craftsman or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer. ¹ Bez'alel and **36** Oho'liab and every able man in whom the LORD has put ability and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded.”

2 And Moses called Bez'alel and Oho'liab and every able man in whose mind the LORD had put ability, every one whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work; ³ and they received from Moses all the freewill offering which the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, ⁴ so that all the able men who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task that he was doing, ⁵ and said to Moses, “The people bring much more than enough for doing the work which the LORD has commanded us to do.” ⁶ So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, “Let neither man nor woman do anything more for the offering for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing; ⁷ for the stuff they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more.

8 And all the able men among the workmen made the tabernacle with ten curtains; they were made of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet stuff, with cherubim skilfully worked. ⁹ The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains had the same measure.

10 And he coupled five curtains to one another, and the other five curtains he coupled to one another. ¹¹ And he made loops of blue on the edge of the outmost curtain of the first set; likewise he made them on the edge of the outmost curtain of the second set; ¹² he made fifty loops on the one curtain, and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was in the second set; the loops were opposite one another. ¹³ And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains one to the other with clasps; so the tabernacle was one whole.

14 He also made curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. ¹⁵ The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains had the same measure. ¹⁶ He coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. ¹⁷ And he made fifty loops on the edge of the outmost curtain of the one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the other connecting curtain. ¹⁸ And he made fifty clasps of bronze to couple the tent together that it might be one whole. ¹⁹ And he made for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins.

20 Then he made the upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. ²¹ Ten cubits was the length of a frame, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each frame. ²² Each frame had two tenons, for fitting together; he did this for all the frames of the tabernacle. ²³ The frames for the tabernacle he made thus: twenty frames for the south side; ²⁴ and he made forty bases of silver under the twenty frames, two bases under one frame for its two tenons, and two bases under another frame for its two tenons. ²⁵ And for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, he made twenty frames ²⁶ and their forty bases of silver, two bases under one frame and two bases under another frame. ²⁷ And for the rear of the tabernacle westward he made six frames. ²⁸ And he

made two frames for corners of the tabernacle in the rear. ²⁹ And they were separate beneath, but joined at the top, at the first ring; he made two of them thus, for the two corners. ³⁰ There were eight frames with their bases of silver: sixteen bases, under every frame two bases.

31 And he made bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle, ³² and five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle at the rear westward. ³³ And he made the middle bar to pass through from end to end halfway up the frames. ³⁴ And he overlaid the frames with gold, and made their rings of gold for holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

35 And he made the veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; with cherubim skilfully worked he made it. ³⁶ And for it he made four pillars of acacia, and overlaid them with gold; their hooks were of gold, and he cast for them four bases of silver. ³⁷ He also made a screen for the door of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework; ³⁸ and its five pillars with their hooks. He overlaid their capitals, and their fillets were of gold, but their five bases were of bronze.

37 Bez'alel made the ark of acacia wood; two cubits and a half was its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. ² And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a molding of gold around it. ³ And he cast for it four rings of gold for its four corners, two rings on its one side and two rings on its other side. ⁴ And he made poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold, ⁵ and put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark. ⁶ And he made a mercy seat of pure gold; two cubits and a half was its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. ⁷ And he made two cherubim of hammered gold; on

the two ends of the mercy seat he made them,⁸ one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end; of one piece with the mercy seat he made the cherubim on its two ends.⁹ The cherubim spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat were the faces of the cherubim.

10 He also made the table of acacia wood; two cubits was its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height;¹¹ and he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold around it.¹² And he made around it a frame a handbreadth wide, and made a molding of gold around the frame.¹³ He cast for it four rings of gold, and fastened the rings to the four corners at its four legs.¹⁴ Close to the frame were the rings, as holders for the poles to carry the table.¹⁵ He made the poles of acacia wood to carry the table, and overlaid them with gold.¹⁶ And he made the vessels of pure gold which were to be upon the table, its plates and dishes for incense, and its bowls and flagons with which to pour libations.

17 He also made the lampstand of pure gold. The base and the shaft of the lampstand were made of hammered work; its cups, its capitals, and its flowers were of one piece with it.¹⁸ And there were six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it;¹⁹ three cups made like almonds, each with capital and flower on one branch, and three cups made like almonds, each with capital and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand.²⁰ And on the lampstand itself were four cups made like almonds, with their capitals and flowers,²¹ and a capital of one piece with it under each pair of the six branches

going out of it.²² Their capitals and their branches were of one piece with it; the whole of it was one piece of hammered work of pure gold.²³ And he made its seven lamps and its snuffers and its trays of pure gold.²⁴ He made it and all its utensils of a talent of pure gold.

25 He made the altar of incense of acacia wood; its length was a cubit, and its breadth was a cubit; it was square, and two cubits was its height; its horns were of one piece with it.²⁶ He overlaid it with pure gold, its top, and its sides round about, and its horns; and he made a molding of gold round about it,²⁷ and made two rings of gold on it under its molding, on two opposite sides of it, as holders for the poles with which to carry it.²⁸ And he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.

29 He made the holy anointing oil also, and the pure fragrant incense, blended as by the perfumer.

38 He made the altar of burnt offering also of acacia wood; five cubits was its length, and five cubits its breadth; it was square, and three cubits was its height.² He made horns for it on its four corners; its horns were of one piece with it, and he overlaid it with bronze.³ And he made all the utensils of the altar, the pots, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the firepans: all its utensils he made of bronze.⁴ And he made for the altar a grating, a network of bronze, under its ledge, extending halfway down.⁵ He cast four rings on the four corners of the bronze grating as holders for the poles;⁶ he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with bronze.⁷ And he put the poles through the rings on the sides of the altar, to carry it with them; he made it hollow, with boards.

8 And he made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who

37.10–16: See 25.23–30. 17–24: See 25.31–40. 25–28: See 30.1–10. 29: See 30.22–38. 38.1–7: See 27.1–8. 8: See 30.17–21.

ministered at the door of the tent of meeting.

9 And he made the court; for the south side the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits; ¹⁰ their pillars were twenty and their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. ¹¹ And for the north side a hundred cubits, their pillars twenty, their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. ¹² And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. ¹³ And for the front to the east, fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings for one side of the gate were fifteen cubits, with three pillars and three bases. ¹⁵ And so for the other side; on this hand and that hand by the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits, with three pillars and three bases. ¹⁶ All the hangings round about the court were of fine twined linen. ¹⁷ And the bases for the pillars were of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver; the overlaying of their capitals was also of silver, and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. ¹⁸ And the screen for the gate of the court was embroidered with needlework in blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; it was twenty cubits long and five cubits high in its breadth, corresponding to the hangings of the court. ¹⁹ And their pillars were four; their four bases were of bronze, their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their capitals and their fillets of silver. ²⁰ And all the pegs for the tabernacle and for the court round about were of bronze.

21 This is the sum of the things for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the

testimony, as they were counted at the commandment of Moses, for the work of the Levites under the direction of Ith'amar the son of Aaron the priest. ²² Bez'alel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses; ²³ and with him was Oho'liab the son of Ahis'amach, of the tribe of Dan, a craftsman and designer and embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen.

24 All the gold that was used for the work, in all the construction of the sanctuary, the gold from the offering, was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary. ²⁵ And the silver from those of the congregation who were numbered was a hundred talents and a thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary: ²⁶ a beka a head (that is, half a shekel, by the shekel of the sanctuary), for every one who was numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men. ²⁷ The hundred talents of silver were for casting the bases of the sanctuary, and the bases of the veil; a hundred bases for the hundred talents, a talent for a base. ²⁸ And of the thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their capitals and made fillets for them. ²⁹ And the bronze that was contributed was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels; ³⁰ with it he made the bases for the door of the tent of meeting, the bronze altar and the bronze grating for it and all the utensils of the altar, ³¹ the bases round about the court, and the bases of the gate of the court, all the pegs of the tabernacle, and all the pegs round about the court.

9-20: See 27.9-19. 21-31: This is a supplement which presupposes the appointment of Ithamar as head of the Levites (Num. ch. 3; 4.33) and the Israelite census (Num. ch. 1). 21: *The tabernacle of the testimony*, a phrase indicating that the sanctuary contained the ark and ten commandments. 24-26: The silver tax is computed at the rate set forth in 30.11-16 and with the figures of the later census in mind (see Num. 1.17-46 n.), the result being that the figures are

39 And of the blue and purple and scarlet stuff they made finely wrought garments, for ministering in the holy place; they made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

2 And he made the ephod of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. ³ And gold leaf was hammered out and cut into threads to work into the blue and purple and the scarlet stuff, and into the fine twined linen, in skilled design. ⁴ They made for the ephod shoulder-pieces, joined to it at its two edges. ⁵ And the skilfully woven band upon it, to gird it on, was of the same materials and workmanship, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 The onyx stones were prepared, enclosed in settings of gold filigree and engraved like the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the sons of Israel. ⁷ And he set them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, to be stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

8 He made the breastpiece, in skilled work, like the work of the ephod, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. ⁹ It was square; the breastpiece was made double, a span its length and a span its breadth when doubled. ¹⁰ And they set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; ¹¹ and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹² and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ¹³ and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they were enclosed in settings of gold filigree. ¹⁴ There were twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel; they were like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. ¹⁵ And they made on the breastpiece twisted chains like cords, of pure

gold; ¹⁶ and they made two settings of gold filigree and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece; ¹⁷ and they put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece. ¹⁸ Two ends of the two cords they had attached to the two settings of filigree; thus they attached it in front to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod. ¹⁹ Then they made two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod. ²⁰ And they made two rings of gold, and attached them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at its joining above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. ²¹ And they bound the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, so that it should lie upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece should not come loose from the ephod; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 He also made the robe of the ephod woven all of blue; ²³ and the opening of the robe in it was like the opening in a garment, with a binding around the opening, that it might not be torn. ²⁴ On the skirts of the robe they made pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen. ²⁵ They also made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the skirts of the robe round about, between the pomegranates; ²⁶ a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate round about upon the skirts of the robe for ministering; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

27 They also made the coats, woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, ²⁸ and the turban of fine linen, and the caps of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twined linen, ²⁹ and the girdle of fine twined linen and of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, embroidered with needlework; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD."

³¹ And they tied to it a lace of blue, to fasten it on the turban above; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

32 Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished; and the people of Israel had done according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so had they done. ³³ And they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its utensils, its hooks, its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; ³⁴ the covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins, and the veil of the screen; ³⁵ the ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat; ³⁶ the table with all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ³⁷ the lampstand of pure gold and its lamps with the lamps set and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; ³⁸ the golden altar, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the door of the tent; ³⁹ the bronze altar, and its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the laver and its base; ⁴⁰ the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords, and its pegs; and all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; ⁴¹ the finely worked garments for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons to serve as priests. ⁴² According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work. ⁴³ And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it. And Moses blessed them.

40 The LORD said to Moses, ² "On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the

tent of meeting. ³ And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. ⁴ And you shall bring in the table, and set its arrangements in order; and you shall bring in the lampstand, and set up its lamps. ⁵ And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ⁶ You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, ⁷ and place the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ⁸ And you shall set up the court round about, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court. ⁹ Then you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture; and it shall become holy. ¹⁰ You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar; and the altar shall be most holy. ¹¹ You shall also anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it. ¹² Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and shall wash them with water, ¹³ and put upon Aaron the holy garments, and you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. ¹⁴ You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, ¹⁵ and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests: and their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

16 Thus did Moses; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did. ¹⁷ And in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. ¹⁸ Moses erected the tabernacle; he laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars; ¹⁹ and he spread the tent

39.32-43: Completion of the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. On the blending of the tabernacle and tent traditions (vv. 33,40), compare 26.7-14. **40.1-33:** The erection and furnishing of the tabernacle according to previous instructions. **9-15:** See 30.26-29. **17:** According to priestly chronology, the workers erected the tabernacle nine months after the arrival at Sinai (19.1).

over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁰ And he took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark, and set the mercy seat above on the ark; ²¹ and he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony; as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²² And he put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, ²³ and set the bread in order on it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁴ And he put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, ²⁵ and set up the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁶ And he put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, ²⁷ and burnt fragrant incense upon it; as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁸ And he put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ²⁹ And he set the altar of burnt offering at the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the cereal offering; as the LORD had

commanded Moses. ³⁰ And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, ³¹ with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet; ³² when they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. ³³ And he erected the court round the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶ Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would go onward; ³⁷ but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not go onward till the day that it was taken up. ³⁸ For throughout all their journeys the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

40.34-38: These concluding verses hark back to 25.8 (see 29.43-46). *The cloud* and *the glory* are signs of God's tabernacling presence (see 16.6-7 n.). **35:** 1 Kg.8.10-11; Is.6.3,4. **36-38:** The ancient symbols of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (13.21-22) are connected with the tabernacle on the view that it was a portable sanctuary which accompanied Israel on its journey.

LEVITICUS

Leviticus is pre-eminently a book of worship. The English title, derived from the Greek and Latin versions of the Hebrew Bible, refers to the Levitical priests who were set apart to minister at the sanctuary. The book falls into six parts: (1) laws dealing with sacrifices (chs. 1-7); (2) the consecration of the priests to their office (chs. 8-10); (3) laws setting forth the distinction between clean and unclean (chs. 11-15); (4) the ceremony for the annual day of atonement (ch. 16); (5) laws to govern Israel's life as a holy people (chs. 17-26); (6) an appendix on religious vows (ch. 27).

Although this section of the Pentateuch has become a separate "book," actually it is a continuation of the priestly tradition at the end of the book of Exodus (chs. 25-31; 35-40). Moreover, the same tradition extends without interruption through the first ten chapters of Numbers. It is generally agreed that this priestly material in its present form comes from a relatively late period (see Introduction to Pentateuch). The compiler, however, has relied upon independent source materials, such as the so-called Holiness Code (chs. 17-26), and upon numerous traditions which reach back to ancient times.

Through the various rituals and laws there breathes the conviction that the holy God tabernacles in the midst of his people during their historical pilgrimage (Ex. 40.34-38). The nearness of God not only accentuates the people's sense of sin but prompts them to turn to him in sacrificial services of worship. For, according to the priestly witness, God has provided the means of atonement and forgiveness whereby the community is restored to wholeness and is reconciled to him.

THE LORD CALLED MOSES, AND spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, ² "Speak to the people of Israel, and say to them, When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of cattle from the herd or from the flock.

³ "If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it at the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD; ⁴ he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted

for him to make atonement for him. ⁵ Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD; and Aaron's sons the priests shall present the blood, and throw the blood round about against the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting. ⁶ And he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces; ⁷ and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay wood in order upon the fire; ⁸ and Aaron's sons the priests shall lay the pieces, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; ⁹ but its entrails

1.1-17: Burnt offerings. 1: In the priestly view the laws of Leviticus were delivered to Moses from the tent of meeting or tabernacle (Ex. 25.22; 26.1-37) during the wilderness sojourn (7.37-38; Ex. 40.16-38). 2: The sacrifices dealt with in this chapter are regarded as offerings or gifts to God out of the worshiper's substance. 3-9: A sacrifice from the herd. 3: The burnt offering, the chief daily offering (6.9), was one in which the whole animal was burnt on the altar as an act of praise and adoration. At the door, i.e. at the great altar in the court (Ex. ch. 38; 40.6). 4: The worshiper symbolically identifies himself with his sacrifice (see Ex. 29.10 n.). According to the ancient notion of substitutionary sacrifice, the animal sacrifice makes atonement for him or "puts a cover" over his sin (see Ex. 29.35-37 n.). 5: Blood, the seat of the mystery of life (17.11; Dt. 12.23; Gen. 9.4), was held to be peculiarly sacred to God. Therefore, on the principle of the sacrifice of life for life, the shedding of blood was efficacious in forgiving sin and reconciling man to God. The act of throwing the blood against the altar symbolizes God's participation in the atonement ceremony (see Ex. 24.6-8 n.). On Aaron's sons the priests, see Ex. 28.1-5 n.

and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn the whole on the altar, as a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

10 "If his gift for a burnt offering is from the flock, from the sheep or goats, he shall offer a male without blemish; 11 and he shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw its blood against the altar round about. 12 And he shall cut it into pieces, with its head and its fat, and the priest shall lay them in order upon the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; 13 but the entrails and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer the whole, and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

14 "If his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or of young pigeons. 15 And the priest shall bring it to the altar and wring off its head, and burn it on the altar; and its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar; 16 and he shall take away its crop with the feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east side, in the place for ashes; 17 he shall tear it by its wings, but shall not divide it asunder. And the priest shall burn it on the altar, upon the wood that is on the fire; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

2 "When any one brings a cereal offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankin-

cense on it, 2 and bring it to Aaron's sons the priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense; and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion upon the altar, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD. 3 And what is left of the cereal offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings by fire to the LORD.

4 "When you bring a cereal offering baked in the oven as an offering, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil. 5 And if your offering is a cereal offering baked on a griddle, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mixed with oil; 6 you shall break it in pieces, and pour oil on it; it is a cereal offering. 7 And if your offering is a cereal offering cooked in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. 8 And you shall bring the cereal offering that is made of these things to the LORD; and when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9 And the priest shall take from the cereal offering its memorial portion and burn this on the altar, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD. 10 And what is left of the cereal offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings by fire to the LORD.

11 "No cereal offering which you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven; for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey as an offering by fire to the LORD. 12 As an offering of first fruits

9: A *pleasing odor*, a traditional expression for an offering acceptable to God (see Gen.8.21-22 n.; compare Eph.5.2). 10-13: A sacrifice from the flock. 14-17: The offering to be made by poor people who cannot afford a sacrifice from the herd or flock.

2.1-16: Cereal offerings. 1: As Abel's offering was from the flock, so Cain's was a typical cereal offering from "the fruit of the ground" (Gen.4.3-5). Both types were expressions of gratitude and praise. Cereal offerings often accompanied an animal sacrifice (7.11-14; 8.26; 9.4; Num.15.1-10). *Oil*, i.e. olive oil. *Frankincense*, Ex.30.34. 2-3: Part of the offering is a *memorial portion*, i.e. it memorializes the worshiper before God. The unburned remainder is *most holy* because, being consecrated to God, only the priests could eat it. In Israel it was not believed that sacrifices satisfied the physical needs of the Deity, as in pagan religions. Rather, sacrifice supported the priests (see Ex.29.24 n.; 1 Sam.2.13-17), who, in eating their portion, identified themselves with the worshiper in his approach to God. 11: Honey was forbidden because, like leaven (see Ex.12.15 n.), it was associated with foods that ferment.

you may bring them to the LORD, but they shall not be offered on the altar for a pleasing odor. ¹³ You shall season all your cereal offerings with salt; you shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your cereal offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

14 "If you offer a cereal offering of first fruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the cereal offering of your first fruits crushed new grain from fresh ears, parched with fire. ¹⁵ And you shall put oil upon it, and lay frankincense on it; it is a cereal offering. ¹⁶ And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion part of the crushed grain and of the oil with all of its frankincense; it is an offering by fire to the LORD.

3 "If a man's offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. ² And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering and kill it at the door of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw the blood against the altar round about. ³ And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an offering by fire to the LORD, he shall offer the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver which he shall take away with the kidneys. ⁵ Then Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt offering, which is upon the wood on the fire; it is an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

6 "If his offering for a sacrifice of

peace offering to the LORD is an animal from the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. ⁷ If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, ⁸ laying his hand upon the head of his offering and killing it before the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the altar round about. ⁹ Then from the sacrifice of the peace offering as an offering by fire to the LORD he shall offer its fat, the fat tail entire, taking it away close by the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat that is on the entrails, ¹⁰ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver which he shall take away with the kidneys. ¹¹ And the priest shall burn it on the altar as food offered by fire to the LORD.

12 "If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD, ¹³ and lay his hand upon its head, and kill it before the tent of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall throw its blood against the altar round about. ¹⁴ Then he shall offer from it, as his offering for an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat covering the entrails, and all the fat that is on the entrails, ¹⁵ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver which he shall take away with the kidneys. ¹⁶ And the priest shall burn them on the altar as food offered by fire for a pleasing odor. All fat is the LORD's. ¹⁷ It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood."

12: *First fruits* (vv. 14–16; see Ex.23.19; 34.26). 13: *Salt of the covenant* (Num.18.19; 2 Chr.13.5) reflects the oriental practice of making a covenant by eating a meal seasoned with salt. Here salt symbolizes the covenant relation upon which the whole sacrificial system rests.

3.1–17: *Peace offerings*. While the burnt offering was a sacrifice of praise (ch. 1), the peace offering, also an ancient type of sacrifice (Ex.24.11; Dt.12.7,18; 1 Sam.9.11–14,22–24), was a covenant meal in which the worshiper was sacramentally related to the LORD and to fellow-Israelites. 1–5: Sacrifice from the herd (1.3–9). In this case only certain parts (suet, kidneys) are burned; the rest is consumed by priests and people in a communion meal. 6–17: Sacrifice from the flock (compare 1.10–13). 16: Fat, like blood, was held to be God's portion of the sacrifice (7.22–27; Ex.23.18).

4.1–5.13: *The sin offering*. This is a sacrifice of repentance for sin which has broken man's

4 And the LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to the people of Israel, If any one sins unwittingly in any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and does any one of them, ³ if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer for the sin which he has committed a young bull without blemish to the LORD for a sin offering. ⁴ He shall bring the bull to the door of the tent of meeting before the LORD, and lay his hand on the head of the bull, and kill the bull before the LORD. ⁵ And the anointed priest shall take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting; ⁶ and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle part of the blood seven times before the LORD in front of the veil of the sanctuary. ⁷ And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the LORD which is in the tent of meeting, and the rest of the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the door of the tent of meeting. ⁸ And all the fat of the bull of the sin offering he shall take from it, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ⁹ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver which he shall take away with the kidneys ¹⁰ (just as these are taken from the ox of the sacrifice of the peace offerings), and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of burnt offering. ¹¹ But the skin of the bull and all its flesh, with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung, ¹² the whole bull he shall carry forth outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes

are poured out, and shall burn it on a fire of wood; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

13 "If the whole congregation of Israel commits a sin unwittingly and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done and are guilty; ¹⁴ when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a young bull for a sin offering and bring it before the tent of meeting; ¹⁵ and the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bull before the LORD, and the bull shall be killed before the LORD. ¹⁶ Then the anointed priest shall bring some of the blood of the bull to the tent of meeting, ¹⁷ and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the veil. ¹⁸ And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which is in the tent of meeting before the LORD; and the rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the door of the tent of meeting. ¹⁹ And all its fat he shall take from it and burn upon the altar. ²⁰ Thus shall he do with the bull; as he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this; and the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. ²¹ And he shall carry forth the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

22 "When a ruler sins, doing unwittingly any one of all the things which the LORD his God has commanded not to be done, and is guilty,

relation to God and has endangered the welfare of the community. 2: The sacrifice is efficacious only for one who sins *unwittingly*, i.e. who inadvertently offends God's holiness. The sacrifice must be accompanied by confession (5.5). Priestly tradition provides no expiation for sin committed deliberately (see Num.15.30 n.; Heb.5.2 n.). 3-12: Offering for the high priest (compare Ex.29.10-14). 4: Compare 1.3-4. 6: *The veil of the sanctuary*, see Ex.26.31-33 n. 7: *The altar of fragrant incense* was inside the tabernacle (Ex.30.1-10). 8-12: Only the sacred, vital parts are to be sacrificed; the remainder, being contaminated by the sin of him who laid his hands upon it (v. 4), must be burned outside the camp. 13-21: Offering for the whole congregation (compare Num.15.22-26). 15: *The elders* are the representatives of the people. 20: *Make atonement*

²³ if the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, a male without blemish, ²⁴ and shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD; it is a sin offering. ²⁵ Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. ²⁶ And all its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings; so the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven.

²⁷ "If any one of the common people sins unwittingly in doing any one of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and is guilty, ²⁸ when the sin which he has committed is made known to him he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. ²⁹ And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering in the place of burnt offering. ³⁰ And the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. ³¹ And all its fat he shall remove, as the fat is removed from the peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a pleasing odor to the LORD; and the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.

³² "If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish, ³³ and lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. ³⁴ Then the priest shall take some

of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. ³⁵ And all its fat he shall remove as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar, upon the offerings by fire to the LORD; and the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.

5 "If any one sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity. ² Or if any one touches an unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean beast or a carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, and it is hidden from him, and he has become unclean, he shall be guilty. ³ Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort the uncleanness may be with which one becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, when he comes to know it he shall be guilty. ⁴ Or if any one utters with his lips a rash oath to do evil or to do good, any sort of rash oath that men swear, and it is hidden from him, when he comes to know it he shall in any of these be guilty. ⁵ When a man is guilty in any of these, he shall confess the sin he has committed, ⁶ and he shall bring his guilt offering to the LORD for the sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.

⁷ "But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring, as his guilt offering to the LORD for the sin which he has committed, two turtledoves or two

(vv. 26,31,35), see 1.4 n. 22-26: Offering for a ruler. 27-35: Offering for an ordinary person. 5.1-4: Cases which require a sin offering. 1: The refusal to testify as a witness could lead to a miscarriage of justice. *Bear his iniquity*, i.e. take the consequences of sin. 2-3: For laws about uncleanness, see chs. 11-15; Num.19.11-13. 5: Confession of sin must precede the rite, for sacrifice is not a magical means of atonement. 6: Here and in v. 7 *guilt offering* refers to the sin offering (vv. 8,9,11,12). 7-13: A supplement to 4.27-35, which covers the case of a poor man who cannot afford a more costly animal (compare 1.14-15).

young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.

⁸ He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer first the one for the sin offering; he shall wring its head from its neck, but shall not sever it, ⁹ and he shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar; it is a sin offering. ¹⁰ Then he shall offer the second for a burnt offering according to the ordinance; and the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.

¹¹ "But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he shall bring, as his offering for the sin which he has committed, a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, and shall put no frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. ¹² And he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take a handful of it as its memorial portion and burn this on the altar, upon the offerings by fire to the LORD; it is a sin offering. ¹³ Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed in any one of these things, and he shall be forgiven. And the remainder shall be for the priest, as in the cereal offering."

¹⁴ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁵ "If any one commits a breach of faith and sins unwittingly in any of the holy things of the LORD, he shall bring, as his guilt offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued by you in shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; it is a guilt offering. ¹⁶ He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing, and shall add a fifth

to it and give it to the priest; and the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.

¹⁷ "If any one sins, doing any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity. ¹⁸ He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued by you at the price for a guilt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him for the error which he committed unwittingly, and he shall be forgiven. ¹⁹ It is a guilt offering; he is guilty before the LORD."

^{6a} The LORD said to Moses, ² "If any one sins and commits a breach of faith against the LORD by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor ³ or has found what was lost and lied about it, swearing falsely—in any of all the things which men do and sin therein, ⁴ when one has sinned and become guilty, he shall restore what he took by robbery, or what he got by oppression, or the deposit which was committed to him, or the lost thing which he found, ⁵ or anything about which he has sworn falsely; he shall restore it in full, and shall add a fifth to it, and give it to him to whom it belongs, on the day of his guilt offering. ⁶ And he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued by you at the price for a guilt offering; ⁷ and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any of the things which one may do and thereby become guilty."

^{8b} The LORD said to Moses,
^a Ch 5.20 in Heb ^b Ch 6.1 in Heb

5.14-6.7: The guilt offering. This type of offering is prescribed for offenses against God and fellow-men which require that restitution accompany the sacrifice. **15-16:** These verses deal with the withholding of the LORD's *holy things*, i.e. the offerings and tithes that are due him. *On the shekel of the sanctuary*, see Ex.30.13 n. **17-19:** The case of unwitting disobedience is similar to cases requiring a sin offering (4.27-35; compare 7.7). **6.1-7:** Cases involving damage against another person (compare Ex.22.7-15). This law is supplemented by the legislation in Num.5.5-10.

6.8-7.38: Instructions to priests concerning sacrifices. 9-13: A supplement to 1.3-17. **9:** The

⁹ "Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. ¹⁰ And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and put his linen breeches upon his body, and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has consumed the burnt offering on the altar, and put them beside the altar. ¹¹ Then he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. ¹² The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it, it shall not go out; the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it, and shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. ¹³ Fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually; it shall not go out.

¹⁴ "And this is the law of the cereal offering. The sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD, in front of the altar.

¹⁵ And one shall take from it a handful of the fine flour of the cereal offering with its oil and all the frankincense which is on the cereal offering, and burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

¹⁶ And the rest of it Aaron and his sons shall eat; it shall be eaten unleavened in a holy place; in the court of the tent of meeting they shall eat it.

¹⁷ It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their portion of my offerings by fire; it is a thing most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. ¹⁸ Every male among the children of Aaron may eat of it, as decreed for ever throughout your generations, from the LORD's offerings by

fire; whoever touches them shall become holy."

¹⁹ The LORD said to Moses, ²⁰ "This is the offering which Aaron and his sons shall offer to the LORD on the day when he is anointed: a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular cereal offering, half of it in the morning and half in the evening. ²¹ It shall be made with oil on a griddle; you shall bring it well mixed, in baked^c pieces like a cereal offering, and offer it for a pleasing odor to the LORD. ²² The priest from among Aaron's sons, who is anointed to succeed him, shall offer it to the LORD as decreed for ever; the whole of it shall be burned. ²³ Every cereal offering of a priest shall be wholly burned; it shall not be eaten."

²⁴ The LORD said to Moses, ²⁵ "Say to Aaron and his sons, This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD; it is most holy. ²⁶ The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it; in a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting. ²⁷ Whatever^d touches its flesh shall be holy; and when any of its blood is sprinkled on a garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled in a holy place. ²⁸ And the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken; but if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, that shall be scoured, and rinsed in water. ²⁹ Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy. ³⁰ But no sin offering shall be eaten from which any blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place; it shall be burned with fire.

^c Meaning of Heb is uncertain
^d Or Whoever

ever-burning fire on the altar (vv. 12-13) symbolizes Israel's perpetual service of the LORD. The burnt offering was sacrificed in the morning and evening according to Ex.29.38-42; Num. 28.3-8 (but compare the pre-exilic practice reflected in 2 Kg.16.15). ¹⁰: For the priestly dress, see Ex.28.40-43. ¹⁴⁻¹⁸: Supplement to ch. 2. ¹⁷: *A thing most holy*, see 5.15-16 n. ¹⁸: Since the priests eat their portion in the holy place in a state of ritual purity (v. 16), holiness can be transferred to anyone who touches them (see Ex.19.12 n.). ¹⁹⁻²³: Supplement to the law concerning the ordination of priests (Ex. ch. 29). ²⁴⁻³⁰: Supplement to 4.1-5.13. ²⁷⁻²⁸: These verses reflect the ancient view of holiness as something transferable by contact (v. 18). Holiness can be scoured off a bronze vessel; but an earthen vessel, because it is absorbent, must be

7 "This is the law of the guilt offering. It is most holy; ² in the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the guilt offering, and its blood shall be thrown on the altar round about. ³ And all its fat shall be offered, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, ⁴ the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver which he shall take away with the kidneys; ⁵ the priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering by fire to the LORD; it is a guilt offering. ⁶ Every male among the priests may eat of it; it shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. ⁷ The guilt offering is like the sin offering, there is one law for them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. ⁸ And the priest who offers any man's burnt offering shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has offered. ⁹ And every cereal offering baked in the oven and all that is prepared on a pan or a griddle shall belong to the priest who offers it. ¹⁰ And every cereal offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall be for all the sons of Aaron, one as well as another.

11 "And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which one may offer to the LORD. ¹² If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the thank offering unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of fine flour well mixed with oil. ¹³ With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving he shall bring his offering with cakes of leavened bread. ¹⁴ And of such he shall offer one cake from each offering, as an offering to the LORD; it shall belong to the priest who throws the blood of the peace offerings. ¹⁵ And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he

shall not leave any of it until the morning. ¹⁶ But if the sacrifice of his offering is a votive offering or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the morrow what remains of it shall be eaten, ¹⁷ but what remains of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. ¹⁸ If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten on the third day, he who offers it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be credited to him; it shall be an abomination, and he who eats of it shall bear his iniquity.

19 "Flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. All who are clean may eat flesh, ²⁰ but the person who eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of the LORD's peace offerings while an uncleanness is on him, that person shall be cut off from his people. ²¹ And if any one touches an unclean thing, whether the uncleanness of man or an unclean beast or any unclean abomination, and then eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of the LORD's peace offerings, that person shall be cut off from his people."

22 The LORD said to Moses, ²³ "Say to the people of Israel, You shall eat no fat, of ox, or sheep, or goat. ²⁴ The fat of an animal that dies of itself, and the fat of one that is torn by beasts, may be put to any other use, but on no account shall you eat it. ²⁵ For every person who eats of the fat of an animal of which an offering by fire is made to the LORD shall be cut off from his people. ²⁶ Moreover you shall eat no blood whatever, whether of fowl or of animal, in any of your dwellings. ²⁷ Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people."

28 The LORD said to Moses, ²⁹ "Say to the people of Israel, He that offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to the

destroyed. 7.1-10: Supplement to 5.14-6.7. 11-36: Supplement to 3.1-17. 12-14: The peace offering may be accompanied by a cereal offering (see 2.1 n.) for a thanksgiving. 16: *Votive offering*, see ch. 27. 18: *Bear his iniquity*, see 5.1 n. 19: *Any unclean thing*, see ch. 11. 20: Conditions of personal uncleanness are described in chs. 12-15. *Cut off from his people*, a reference to the death penalty. 22: 3.16. 24: See Ex.22.31 n. 26-27: On this prohibition, see 1.5 n. 28-36:

LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD; from the sacrifice of his peace offerings ³⁰ he shall bring with his own hands the offerings by fire to the LORD; he shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be waved as a wave offering before the LORD. ³¹ The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be for Aaron and his sons. ³² And the right thigh you shall give to the priest as an offering from the sacrifice of your peace offerings; ³³ he among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat shall have the right thigh for a portion. ³⁴ For the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered I have taken from the people of Israel, out of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons, as a perpetual due from the people of Israel. ³⁵ This is the portion of Aaron and of his sons from the offerings made by fire to the LORD, consecrated to them on the day they were presented to serve as priests of the LORD; ³⁶ the LORD commanded this to be given them by the people of Israel, on the day that they were anointed; it is a perpetual due throughout their generations."

³⁷ This is the law of the burnt offering, of the cereal offering, of the sin offering, of the guilt offering, of the consecration, and of the peace offerings, ³⁸ which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day that he commanded the people of Israel to bring their offerings to the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai.

8 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and the bull of the sin offering, and the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread; ³ and assemble all the congre-

gation at the door of the tent of meeting." ⁴ And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the congregation was assembled at the door of the tent of meeting.

⁵ And Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded to be done." ⁶ And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. ⁷ And he put on him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and girded him with the skillfully woven band of the ephod, binding it to him therewith. ⁸ And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. ⁹ And he set the turban upon his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁰ Then Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. ¹¹ And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to consecrate them. ¹² And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him, to consecrate him. ¹³ And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and clothed them with coats, and girded them with girdles, and bound caps on them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁴ Then he brought the bull of the sin offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bull of the sin offering. ¹⁵ And Moses killed it, and took the blood, and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar round about, and purified the altar, and poured out the blood at the base of the altar, and consecrated it, to

The priests' portion of the peace offering. **30:** On the *wave offering*, see Ex.29.24 n. **34:** A *perpetual due*, see 2.2-3 n.

8.1-36: The ordination of the priests (based on Ex. ch. 29). **2:** On the relation of the Aaronic order to the Levites as a whole, see Num.3.5-10 n. **5-9:** Ex.29.4-6. The priestly regalia is described in Ex. ch. 28. **10-13:** The ceremony of anointment (Ex.29.7-9). On the anointing of tabernacle and furnishings, see Ex.30.26-30; 40.9-15. **14-17:** Compare Ex.29.10-14; the ceremony began with a special sin offering for the priests (4.1-12). **15:** On atonement for the altar,

make atonement for it. ¹⁶ And he took all the fat that was on the entrails, and the appendage of the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses burned them on the altar. ¹⁷ But the bull, and its skin, and its flesh, and its dung, he burned with fire outside the camp, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁸ Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. ¹⁹ And Moses killed it, and threw the blood upon the altar round about. ²⁰ And when the ram was cut into pieces, Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat. ²¹ And when the entrails and the legs were washed with water, Moses burned the whole ram on the altar, as a burnt offering, a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

²² Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. ²³ And Moses killed it, and took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the great toe of his right foot. ²⁴ And Aaron's sons were brought, and Moses put some of the blood on the tips of their right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the great toes of their right feet; and Moses threw the blood upon the altar round about. ²⁵ Then he took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that was on the entrails, and the appendage of the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and the right thigh; ²⁶ and out of the basket of unleavened bread which was before the LORD he took one unleavened cake, and one cake of bread with oil, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat and on the right thigh; ²⁷ and

he put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and waved them as a wave offering before the LORD. ²⁸ Then Moses took them from their hands, and burned them on the altar with the burnt offering, as an ordination offering, a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD. ²⁹ And Moses took the breast, and waved it for a wave offering before the LORD; it was Moses' portion of the ram of ordination, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁰ Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and his garments, and also upon his sons and his sons' garments; so he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

³¹ And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh at the door of the tent of meeting, and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it'; ³² and what remains of the flesh and the bread you shall burn with fire. ³³ And you shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take seven days to ordain you. ³⁴ As has been done today, the LORD has commanded to be done to make atonement for you. ³⁵ At the door of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, performing what the LORD has charged, lest you die; for so I am commanded." ³⁶ And Aaron and his sons did all the things which the LORD commanded by Moses.

9 On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; ² and he said to Aaron, "Take

see Ex.29.35-37 n. **18-21**: The second ordination sacrifice was a burnt offering (1.10-13; Ex.29.15-17). **22-35**: Compare Ex.29.19-37. The climax of the service was the sacrifice of the ram of ordination, i.e. a peace offering or communion meal (vv. 31-35). **26**: The peace offering was accompanied by a cereal offering (7.12-14). **27-28**: In this case the wave offering (see Ex.29.24 n.) did not go to the priests, as in the usual peace offering (7.28-36), but to Moses the officiating priest.

9.1-24: The commencement of Aaron's high priesthood. **1**: The eighth day, i.e. at the end of

a bull calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD.

³ And say to the people of Israel, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering, ⁴ and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a cereal offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to you.' ⁵ And they brought what Moses commanded before the tent of meeting; and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. ⁶ And Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD commanded you to do; and the glory of the LORD will appear to you." ⁷ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar, and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people; and bring the offering of the people, and make atonement for them; as the LORD has commanded."

⁸ So Aaron drew near to the altar, and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself. ⁹ And the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the base of the altar; ¹⁰ but the fat and the kidneys and the appendage of the liver from the sin offering he burned upon the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses. ¹¹ The flesh and the skin he burned with fire outside the camp.

¹² And he killed the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons delivered to him the blood, and he threw it on the altar round about. ¹³ And they delivered the burnt offering to him, piece by piece, and the head; and he burned them upon the altar. ¹⁴ And he washed

the entrails and the legs, and burned them with the burnt offering on the altar.

¹⁵ Then he presented the people's offering, and took the goat of the sin offering which was for the people, and killed it, and offered it for sin, like the first sin offering. ¹⁶ And he presented the burnt offering, and offered it according to the ordinance. ¹⁷ And he presented the cereal offering, and filled his hand from it, and burned it upon the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning.

¹⁸ He killed the ox also and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings for the people; and Aaron's sons delivered to him the blood, which he threw upon the altar round about, ¹⁹ and the fat of the ox and of the ram, the fat tail, and that which covers the entrails, and the kidneys, and the appendage of the liver; ²⁰ and they put the fat upon the breasts, and he burned the fat upon the altar, ²¹ but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved for a wave offering before the LORD; as Moses commanded.

²² Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. ²³ And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting; and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴ And fire came forth from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat upon the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

10 Now Nadab and Abi'hu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer, and put fire in it, and laid incense on

the seven day ordination ceremony (8.33). **2-7:** Preparations for an assembly of the whole congregation for worship. **8-14:** Aaron offered a sin offering (4.1-12) and a burnt offering (1.3-13) to make atonement for himself. **15-21:** The people's sin offering, burnt and cereal offering, and peace offering were presented according to the ordinances of chs. 1-7. **22:** *He came down*, i.e. from the steps leading up to the great altar (Ezek.43.17). **24:** Jg.6.21.

10.1-20: The fate of Nadab and Abihu. Two of Aaron's sons were destroyed for their sin in making an unauthorized offering before the LORD. **1:** *Unholy fire* refers to incense which was offered in presumptuous defiance of the rules of the theocratic community (Ex.30.34-38;

it, and offered unholy fire before the LORD, such as he had not commanded them.² And fire came forth from the presence of the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

³ Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said, 'I will show myself holy among those who are near me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' " And Aaron held his peace.

⁴ And Moses called Mish'a-el and Elza'phan, the sons of Uz'ziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Draw near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp."

⁵ So they drew near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said.

⁶ And Moses said to Aaron and to Elea'zar and Ith'amar, his sons, "Do not let the hair of your heads hang loose, and do not rend your clothes, lest you die, and lest wrath come upon all the congregation; but your brethren, the whole house of Israel, may bewail the burning which the LORD has kindled." ⁷ And do not go out from the door of the tent of meeting, lest you die; for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses.

⁸ And the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying, ⁹ "Drink no wine nor strong drink, you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations." ¹⁰ You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; ¹¹ and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by Moses."

¹² And Moses said to Aaron and to

Elea'zar and Ith'amar, his sons who were left, "Take the cereal offering that remains of the offerings by fire to the LORD, and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy; ¹³ you shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due, from the offerings by fire to the LORD; for so I am commanded." ¹⁴ But the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered you shall eat in any clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you; for they are given as your due and your sons' due, from the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the people of Israel. ¹⁵ The thigh that is offered and the breast that is waved they shall bring with the offerings by fire of the fat, to wave for a wave offering before the LORD, and it shall be yours, and your sons' with you, as a due for ever; as the LORD has commanded."

¹⁶ Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned! And he was angry with Elea'zar and Ith'amar, the sons of Aaron who were left, saying, ¹⁷ "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary, since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?" ¹⁸ Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded." ¹⁹ And Aaron said to Moses, "Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and yet such things as these have befallen me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have

Num. ch. 16). **2:** See 9.24 n. **3:** *Those who are near me*, i.e. the priests who have access to the holy place. The story explains why the priestly line was traced through Aaron's third son, Eleazar (Ex.6.23-25). **4:** *Mishael* and *Elzaphan*, cousins of Moses (Ex.6.22). **5:** *Their coats*, i.e. priestly tunics (Ex.28.4,39-40). **6:** Aaron and his sons must abstain from signs of mourning, i.e. rending the garments and letting the hair hang loose. The reason is that they are still in a state of ritual purity (v. 7; see 21.10-12). **9:** Ezek.44.21. **10-11:** See chs. 11-15. **12-15:** 7.28-36. The cereal offering (v. 12) accompanied the peace offering (7.11-14). **16-20:** When Aaron and his sons offered their first sin offering after Nadab and Abihu were struck down during the performance of their priestly duties, they failed to eat their rightful portion (see 2.2-3 n.; 6.26), fearing that the LORD was not disposed to accept their atonement for the people.

been acceptable in the sight of the LORD?" ²⁰ And when Moses heard that, he was content.

|| And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ² "Say to the people of Israel, These are the living things which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. ³ Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. ⁴ Nevertheless among those that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these: The camel, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. ⁵ And the rock badger, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. ⁶ And the hare, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. ⁷ And the swine, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. ⁸ Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you.

⁹ "These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. ¹⁰ But anything in the seas or the rivers that has not fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is an abomination to you. ¹¹ They shall remain an abomination to you; of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall have in abomination. ¹² Everything in the waters that has not fins and scales is an abomination to you.

¹³ "And these you shall have in abomination among the birds, they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the os-

prey, ¹⁴ the kite, the falcon according to its kind, ¹⁵ every raven according to its kind, ¹⁶ the ostrich, the night-hawk, the sea gull, the hawk according to its kind, ¹⁷ the owl, the cormorant, the ibis, ¹⁸ the water hen, the pelican, the carrion vulture, ¹⁹ the stork, the heron according to its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

²⁰ "All winged insects that go upon all fours are an abomination to you. ²¹ Yet among the winged insects that go on all fours you may eat those which have legs above their feet, with which to leap on the earth. ²² Of them you may eat: the locust according to its kind, the bald locust according to its kind, the cricket according to its kind, and the grasshopper according to its kind. ²³ But all other winged insects which have four feet are an abomination to you.

²⁴ "And by these you shall become unclean; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening, ²⁵ and whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. ²⁶ Every animal which parts the hoof but is not cloven-footed or does not chew the cud is unclean to you; every one who touches them shall be unclean. ²⁷ And all that go on their paws, among the animals that go on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening, ²⁸ and he who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you.

²⁹ "And these are unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm upon the earth: the weasel, the mouse, the great lizard according to its kind, ³⁰ the gecko, the land crocodile, the

11.1-47: Clean and unclean animals (Dt. 14.3-20). The laws of chs. 11-15 come after the ordination tradition (chs. 8-10) because one of the tasks of the priests was to make a distinction between clean and unclean (10.10). This distinction is not based merely on sanitary or hygienic considerations, in the modern sense that "cleanliness is next to godliness." That which is unclean is ritually impure and therefore the opposite of holy. **5-6:** Strictly, these animals do not chew the cud but only appear to. **7:** *The swine* came to be regarded as the animal that was particularly unclean (1 Macc.1.54). **24-38:** An unclean animal, when dead, transmits uncleanness at the touch but it may be safely handled while alive. Further, the contagion of unclean-

lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.³¹ These are unclean to you among all that swarm; whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening.³² And anything upon which any of them falls when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is an article of wood or a garment or a skin or a sack, any vessel that is used for any purpose; it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; then it shall be clean.³³ And if any of them falls into any earthen vessel, all that is in it shall be unclean, and you shall break it.³⁴ Any food in it which may be eaten, upon which water may come, shall be unclean; and all drink which may be drunk from every such vessel shall be unclean.³⁵ And everything upon which any part of their carcass falls shall be unclean; whether oven or stove, it shall be broken in pieces; they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you.³⁶ Nevertheless a spring or a cistern holding water shall be clean; but whatever touches their carcass shall be unclean.³⁷ And if any part of their carcass falls upon any seed for sowing that is to be sown, it is clean;³⁸ but if water is put on the seed and any part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.

³⁹ "And if any animal of which you may eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening,⁴⁰ and he who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; he also who carries the carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.

⁴¹ "Every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth is an abomination; it shall not be eaten.⁴² Whatever goes on its belly, and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has

many feet, all the swarming things that swarm upon the earth, you shall not eat; for they are an abomination.⁴³ You shall not make yourselves abominable with any swarming thing that swarms; and you shall not defile yourselves with them, lest you become unclean.⁴⁴ For I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls upon the earth.⁴⁵ For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

⁴⁶ This is the law pertaining to beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms upon the earth,⁴⁷ to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

12 The LORD said to Moses,² "Say to the people of Israel, If a woman conceives, and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean.³ And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.⁴ Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying; she shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed.⁵ But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying for sixty-six days.

⁶ "And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to

ness, like that of its opposite, holiness (6.27-28), affects objects, vessels, etc. **44-45:** The basis for these laws is not irrational taboo but the covenant relationship, which sets Israel apart for the service of God (Ex.19.3-6). As a holy and consecrated people (Ex.22.31), Israelites must avoid all impurity in order that the holy God may tabernacle in their midst (15.31; 18.1-5; 20.22-26; 26.11-12).

12.1-8: Purification of a woman after childbirth. **2:** This law does not imply that sex is evil—a view completely foreign to Israel's thought; rather, the woman becomes unclean because of

the priest at the door of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, ⁷ and he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her; then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. ⁸ And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

13 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ² "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a leprous disease on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests, ³ and the priest shall examine the diseased spot on the skin of his body; and if the hair in the diseased spot has turned white and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous disease; when the priest has examined him he shall pronounce him unclean. ⁴ But if the spot is white in the skin of his body, and appears no deeper than the skin, and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest shall shut up the diseased person for seven days; ⁵ and the priest shall examine him on the seventh day, and if in his eyes the disease is checked and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall shut him up seven days more; ⁶ and the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day, and if the diseased spot is dim and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him

clean; it is only an eruption; and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. ⁷ But if the eruption spreads in the skin, after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall appear again before the priest; ⁸ and the priest shall make an examination, and if the eruption has spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is leprosy.

⁹ "When a man is afflicted with leprosy, he shall be brought to the priest; ¹⁰ and the priest shall make an examination, and if there is a white swelling in the skin, which has turned the hair white, and there is quick raw flesh in the swelling, ¹¹ it is a chronic leprosy in the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not shut him up, for he is unclean. ¹² And if the leprosy breaks out in the skin, so that the leprosy covers all the skin of the diseased person from head to foot, so far as the priest can see, ¹³ then the priest shall make an examination, and if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean of the disease; it has all turned white, and he is clean. ¹⁴ But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. ¹⁵ And the priest shall examine the raw flesh, and pronounce him unclean; raw flesh is unclean, for it is leprosy. ¹⁶ But if the raw flesh turns again and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest, ¹⁷ and the priest shall examine him, and if the disease has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce the diseased person clean; he is clean.

¹⁸ "And when there is in the skin of one's body a boil that has healed, ¹⁹ and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a reddish-

her bodily discharge (v. 7; see 15.16-18 n.). **6:** The *sin offering* is prescribed for inadvertent sin (4.27-35). **8:** See 5.7-13 n.; Lk.2.24.

13.1-59: The diagnosis of leprosy. In this chapter and the next, the word translated "leprosy" is a generic term which includes various skin diseases (including what is called leprosy today), as well as blemishes affecting garments and buildings. **1-8:** A suspicious skin eruption. Tubercular leprosy begins with reddish patches and progresses into nodules and deformities; anesthetic leprosy paralyzes the nerves so that the limbs are numb and eventually lifeless. Whatever type is in mind, the law emphasizes observation so that the disease may be detected in its early stages. **9-17:** In the case of *chronic leprosy*, quarantine for further examination (v. 11) is

white spot, then it shall be shown to the priest;²⁰ and the priest shall make an examination, and if it appears deeper than the skin and its hair has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the disease of leprosy, it has broken out in the boil.²¹ But if the priest examines it, and the hair on it is not white and it is not deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall shut him up seven days;²² and if it spreads in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is diseased.²³ But if the spot remains in one place and does not spread, it is the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

24 "Or, when the body has a burn on its skin and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a spot, reddish-white or white,²⁵ the priest shall examine it, and if the hair in the spot has turned white and it appears deeper than the skin, then it is leprosy; it has broken out in the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a leprous disease.²⁶ But if the priest examines it, and the hair in the spot is not white and it is no deeper than the skin, but is dim, the priest shall shut him up seven days,²⁷ and the priest shall examine him the seventh day; if it is spreading in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a leprous disease.²⁸ But if the spot remains in one place and does not spread in the skin, but is dim, it is a swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him clean; for it is the scar of the burn.

29 "When a man or woman has a disease on the head or the beard,³⁰ the priest shall examine the disease; and if it appears deeper than the skin, and the hair in it is yellow and thin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an itch, a leprosy of the head or the beard.³¹ And if the priest

examines the itching disease, and it appears no deeper than the skin and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall shut up the person with the itching disease for seven days,³² and on the seventh day the priest shall examine the disease; and if the itch has not spread, and there is in it no yellow hair, and the itch appears to be no deeper than the skin,³³ then he shall shave himself, but the itch he shall not shave; and the priest shall shut up the person with the itching disease for seven days more;³⁴ and on the seventh day the priest shall examine the itch, and if the itch has not spread in the skin and it appears to be no deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean.³⁵ But if the itch spreads in the skin after his cleansing,³⁶ then the priest shall examine him, and if the itch has spread in the skin, the priest need not seek for the yellow hair; he is unclean.³⁷ But if in his eyes the itch is checked, and black hair has grown in it, the itch is healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

38 "When a man or a woman has spots on the skin of the body, white spots,³⁹ the priest shall make an examination, and if the spots on the skin of the body are of a dull white, it is tetter that has broken out in the skin; he is clean.

40 "If a man's hair has fallen from his head, he is bald but he is clean.⁴¹ And if a man's hair has fallen from his forehead and temples, he has baldness of the forehead but he is clean.⁴² But if there is on the bald head or the bald forehead a reddish-white diseased spot, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead.⁴³ Then the priest shall examine him, and if the diseased swelling is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, like the appearance of

pointless. 18-23: A boil in which leprosy may break out. 24-28: A burn which may be infected with leprosy. 29-37: An itching disease, perhaps ringworm. 38-39: A vesicular skin disease. 40-44: Falling hair, unless accompanied by other symptoms, is not necessarily a sign of leprosy.

leprosy in the skin of the body, ⁴⁴ he is a leprous man, he is unclean; the priest must pronounce him unclean; his disease is on his head.

45 "The leper who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry, 'Unclean, unclean.'⁴⁶ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone in a habitation outside the camp.

47 "When there is a leprous disease in a garment, whether a woolen or a linen garment, ⁴⁸ in warp or woof of linen or wool, or in a skin or in anything made of skin, ⁴⁹ if the disease shows greenish or reddish in the garment, whether in warp or woof or in skin or in anything made of skin, it is a leprous disease and shall be shown to the priest. ⁵⁰ And the priest shall examine the disease, and shut up that which has the disease for seven days; ⁵¹ then he shall examine the disease on the seventh day. If the disease has spread in the garment, in warp or woof, or in the skin, whatever be the use of the skin, the disease is a malignant leprosy; it is unclean. ⁵² And he shall burn the garment, whether diseased in warp or woof, woolen or linen, or anything of skin, for it is a malignant leprosy; it shall be burned in the fire.

53 "And if the priest examines, and the disease has not spread in the garment in warp or woof or in anything of skin, ⁵⁴ then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which is the disease, and he shall shut it up seven days more; ⁵⁵ and the priest shall examine the diseased thing after it has been washed. And if the diseased spot has not changed color, though the disease has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire, whether

the leprous spot is on the back or on the front.

56 "But if the priest examines, and the disease is dim after it is washed, he shall tear the spot out of the garment or the skin or the warp or woof; ⁵⁷ then if it appears again in the garment, in warp or woof, or in anything of skin, it is spreading; you shall burn with fire that in which is the disease. ⁵⁸ But the garment, warp or woof, or anything of skin from which the disease departs when you have washed it, shall then be washed a second time, and be clean."

59 This is the law for a leprous disease in a garment of wool or linen, either in warp or woof, or in anything of skin, to decide whether it is clean or unclean.

14 The LORD said to Moses, ² "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest; ³ and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall make an examination. Then, if the leprous disease is healed in the leper, ⁴ the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two living clean birds and cedarwood and scarlet stuff and hyssop; ⁵ and the priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. ⁶ He shall take the living bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet stuff and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water; ⁷ and he shall sprinkle it seven times upon him who is to be cleansed of leprosy; then he shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird go into the open field. ⁸ And he who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and

45-46: If truly a leper, the man must appear like a mourner (10.6) and must go into isolation (Job 2.7-8). The judgment that he is *unclean* is based upon the belief that, being ritually impure (see ch. 11 n.), his defilement could be transmitted to others. Even after a leper was cured he was not "clean" until he had been ritually purified (ch. 14). 47-59: *Leprous disease in a garment* refers to mold or mildew.

14.1-32: The cleansing of leprosy. 2: Mk.1.44. 4-8: This ceremony has archaic elements which elude explanation. 4: *Hyssop*, see Ex.12.22 n. 7: Perhaps the freeing of the living bird

he shall be clean; and after that he shall come into the camp, but shall dwell outside his tent seven days.⁹ And on the seventh day he shall shave all his hair off his head; he shall shave off his beard and his eyebrows, all his hair. Then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe his body in water, and he shall be clean.

10 "And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb a year old without blemish, and a cereal offering of three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, and one log of oil.

11 And the priest who cleanses him shall set the man who is to be cleansed and these things before the LORD, at the door of the tent of meeting.¹² And the priest shall take one of the male lambs, and offer it for a guilt offering, along with the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the LORD;¹³ and he shall kill the lamb in the place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the holy place; for the guilt offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest; it is most holy.¹⁴ The priest shall take some of the blood of the guilt offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot.

15 Then the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand,¹⁶ and dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and sprinkle some oil with his finger seven times before the LORD.

17 And some of the oil that remains in his hand the priest shall put on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the guilt offering;¹⁸ and the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he

shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. Then the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD.¹⁹ The priest shall offer the sin offering, to make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. And afterward he shall kill the burnt offering;²⁰ and the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the cereal offering on the altar. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

21 "But if he is poor and cannot afford so much, then he shall take one male lamb for a guilt offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, and a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering, and a log of oil;²² also two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he can afford; the one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering.²³ And on the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting, before the LORD;²⁴ and the priest shall take the lamb of the guilt offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD.²⁵ And he shall kill the lamb of the guilt offering; and the priest shall take some of the blood of the guilt offering, and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot.²⁶ And the priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand;²⁷ and shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the LORD;²⁸ and the priest shall put some of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot, in the place where the blood of the guilt offering was put;²⁹ and the rest of the oil that

symbolizes the carrying away of the leper's uncleanness. 8: On the ritual washing of garments, see 16.23-24; Ex.19.10. 10-20: The offering of appropriate sacrifices. 12: In this case the guilt offering, like the sin offering (v. 19; 5.1-6), is prescribed for an inadvertent offence. *Wave offering*, see Ex.29.24 n. 21-32: See 5.7-13 n.

is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD.³⁰ And he shall offer, of the turtledoves or young pigeons such as he can afford,³¹ one^x for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, along with a cereal offering; and the priest shall make atonement before the LORD for him who is being cleansed.³² This is the law for him in whom is a leprous disease, who cannot afford the offerings for his cleansing."

33 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,³⁴ "When you come into the land of Canaan, which I give you for a possession, and I put a leprous disease in a house in the land of your possession,³⁵ then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, 'There seems to me to be some sort of disease in my house.'³⁶ Then the priest shall command that they empty the house before the priest goes to examine the disease, lest all that is in the house be declared unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house.³⁷ And he shall examine the disease; and if the disease is in the walls of the house with greenish or reddish spots, and if it appears to be deeper than the surface,³⁸ then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days.³⁹ And the priest shall come again on the seventh day, and look; and if the disease has spread in the walls of the house,⁴⁰ then the priest shall command that they take out the stones in which is the disease and throw them into an unclean place outside the city;⁴¹ and he shall cause the inside of the house to be scraped round about, and the plaster that they scrape off they shall pour into an unclean place outside the city;⁴² then they shall take other stones and put them in the place of those stones, and he shall take other plaster and plaster the house.

43 "If the disease breaks out again

in the house, after he has taken out the stones and scraped the house and plastered it,⁴⁴ then the priest shall go and look; and if the disease has spread in the house, it is a malignant leprosy in the house; it is unclean.⁴⁵ And he shall break down the house, its stones and timber and all the plaster of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city to an unclean place.⁴⁶ Moreover he who enters the house while it is shut up shall be unclean until the evening;⁴⁷ and he who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes; and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes.

48 "But if the priest comes and makes an examination, and the disease has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, for the disease is healed.⁴⁹ And for the cleansing of the house he shall take two small birds, with cedarwood and scarlet stuff and hyssop,⁵⁰ and shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water,⁵¹ and shall take the cedarwood and the hyssop and the scarlet stuff, along with the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times.⁵² Thus he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet stuff;⁵³ and he shall let the living bird go out of the city into the open field; so he shall make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean."

54 This is the law for any leprous disease: for an itch,⁵⁵ for leprosy in a garment or in a house,⁵⁶ and for a swelling or an eruption or a spot,⁵⁷ to show when it is unclean and when it is clean. This is the law for leprosy.

x Gk Syr: Heb *afford*, ³¹ *such as he can afford, one*

15 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ² "Say to the people of Israel, When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. ³ And this is the law of his uncleanness for a discharge: whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped from discharge, it is uncleanness in him. ⁴ Every bed on which he who has the discharge lies shall be unclean; and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. ⁵ And any one who touches his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁶ And whoever sits on anything on which he who has the discharge has sat shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁷ And whoever touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁸ And if he who has the discharge spits on one who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁹ And any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. ¹⁰ And whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until the evening; and he who carries such a thing shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹¹ Any one whom he that has the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in water shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹² And the earthen vessel which he who has the discharge touches shall be broken; and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

¹³ "And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven

days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes; and he shall bathe his body in running water, and shall be clean. ¹⁴ And on the eighth day he shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD to the door of the tent of meeting, and give them to the priest; ¹⁵ and the priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD for his discharge.

¹⁶ "And if a man has an emission of semen, he shall bathe his whole body in water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹⁷ And every garment and every skin on which the semen comes shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹⁸ If a man lies with a woman and has an emission of semen, both of them shall bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the evening.

¹⁹ "When a woman has a discharge of blood which is her regular discharge from her body, she shall be in her impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. ²⁰ And everything upon which she lies during her impurity shall be unclean; everything also upon which she sits shall be unclean. ²¹ And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ²² And whoever touches anything upon which she sits shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening; ²³ whether it is the bed or anything upon which she sits, when he touches it he shall be unclean until the evening. ²⁴ And if any man lies with her, and her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

15.1-32: Bodily discharges. Various bodily emissions, it was believed, produced ritual uncleanness which defiled the holy tabernacle in the midst of the people (v. 31). **3-12:** An unclean person contaminates anything or anyone he touches (11.24-38). **13-15:** The prescribed sacrifices to make atonement for uncleanness. On the sin offering, see 4.2 n. **16-18:** It is not suggested that such secretions are evil or that sex is taboo. On holy occasions, such as worship (Ex.19.15) or the conduct of holy war (1 Sam.21.4-6), sexual abstinence was required. **19-30:** See ch. 12.

25 "If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness; as in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. 26 Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her impurity. 27 And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. 28 But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29 And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting. 30 And the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for her unclean discharge.

31 "Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst."

32 This is the law for him who has a discharge and for him who has an emission of semen, becoming unclean thereby; 33 also for her who is sick with her impurity; that is, for any one, male or female, who has a discharge, and for the man who lies with a woman who is unclean.

16 The LORD spoke to Moses, after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died; 2 and the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. 3 But thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and shall have the linen breeches on his body, be girded with the linen girdle, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water, and then put them on. 5 And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

6 "And Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. 7 Then he shall take the two goats, and set them before the LORD at the door of the tent of meeting; 8 and Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Aza'zel. 9 And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD, and offer it as a sin offering; 10 but the goat on which the lot fell for Aza'zel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Aza'zel.

11 "Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for

31: The people of Israel must be holy, for the LORD whose tabernacle is in their midst is holy (compare 19.2; see 11.44-45 n.).

16.1-34: The ritual for the day of atonement. Priestly tradition has preserved an ancient ritual, which has been elaborated during years of cultic usage, as shown by the composite character of this chapter. 1-5: Preparatory instructions. 1: After the block of laws on uncleanness (chs. 11-15), the account resumes from ch. 10. 2: The high priest is to go into the holy place within the veil (Ex.26.31-35) only once a year to make atonement for priests and people (vv. 29,34). The mercy seat, see Ex.25.17-21 n. The cloud, see Ex.40.34-38 n. 4: Compare Ex. ch. 28. 6-10: A short version of the ritual for the day of atonement. Two goats are chosen to bear symbolically the sins of the people. The one chosen for the LORD is to be sacrificed as a sin offering (v. 15); the other is to be driven into the wilderness to Azazel, an evil spirit or desert demon (10.4; compare Lev.17.7; Is.34.14). 11-28: A more elaborate version of the ritual. The high

his house; he shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. ¹² And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small; and he shall bring it within the veil ¹³ and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat which is upon the testimony, lest he die; ¹⁴ and he shall take some of the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle the blood with his finger seven times.

¹⁵ "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood within the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat; ¹⁶ thus he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins; and so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which abides with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. ¹⁷ There shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he enters to make atonement in the holy place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸ Then he shall go out to the altar which is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar round about. ¹⁹ And he shall sprinkle some of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and hallow it from

the uncleannesses of the people of Israel.

²⁰ "And when he has made an end of atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat; ²¹ and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. ²² The goat shall bear all their iniquities upon him to a solitary land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness.

²³ "Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting, and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there; ²⁴ and he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵ And the fat of the sin offering he shall burn upon the altar. ²⁶ And he who lets the goat go to Aza'el shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷ And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be carried forth outside the camp; their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be burned with fire. ²⁸ And he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

²⁹ "And it shall be a statute to you

priest enters the Holy of Holies once to make atonement for the priests (vv. 11-14) and once for the people (vv. 15-22). **13:** The cloud of incense is to cover the mercy seat in order to protect the priest from beholding God (Ex.33.20). **16-19:** The high priest is to make atonement for the tabernacle and altar (Ex.29.35-37) because of the people's sins and uncleannesses. Priestly theology is deeply concerned about the presence of the holy God in the midst of a sinful people. **20-22:** This ritual symbolizes the transfer of the people's sins to the animal which then carries the sins off into the wilderness (see Heb.9.1-10.18 n.). **23-28:** Contact with holiness, like contact with its opposite, uncleanness, requires ceremonial change of garments and ritual ablutions. The ceremony concludes with a burnt offering for priest and people. **29-34:** A statutory requirement that the day of atonement shall be observed annually as a *sabbath of solemn rest*.

for ever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves, and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you;³⁰ for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD.³¹ It is a sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute for ever.³² And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments;³³ he shall make atonement for the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.³⁴ And this shall be an everlasting statute for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins." And Moses did as the LORD commanded him.

17 ²And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron and his sons, and to all the people of Israel, This is the thing which the LORD has commanded.³ If any man of the house of Israel kills an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or kills it outside the camp,⁴ and does not bring it to the door of the tent of meeting, to offer it as a gift to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, bloodguilt shall be imputed to that man; he has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people.⁵ This is to the end that the people of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they slay in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD, to the priest at the door of the tent of meeting, and slay them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the

LORD;⁶ and the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the door of the tent of meeting, and burn the fat for a pleasing odor to the LORD.⁷ So they shall no more slay their sacrifices for satyrs, after whom they play the harlot. This shall be a statute for ever to them throughout their generations.

⁸ "And you shall say to them, Any man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice,⁹ and does not bring it to the door of the tent of meeting, to sacrifice it to the LORD; that man shall be cut off from his people.

¹⁰ "If any man of the house of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people.¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life.¹² Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.¹³ Any man also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust.

¹⁴ "For the life of every creature is the blood of it;^e therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.¹⁵ And

^e Gk Syr Compare Vg: Heb for the life of all flesh, its blood is in its life

17.1-16: Restrictions upon the slaughter of animals. Chapters 17-26 constitute a corpus of laws often called the Holiness Code because of the dominant theme: Israel must be holy as God is holy. **3-7:** The former practice of sacrifice at every legitimate place where the LORD was worshiped (Ex.20.24-25) is modified by this old tradition which requires that animals for food be sacrificed at the central sanctuary (Dt.12.15-28) as a peace offering (ch. 3). **4:** The reason given is that sacrifices in the open fields had been offered to *satyrs* (v. 7), i.e. demons (Is.34.14; Dt.32.17; 2 Chr.11.15). **9:** *Cut off* (v. 4), see 7.20 n. **10-14:** Prohibition against eating blood. **11:** The basis of the priestly sacrificial system (see 1.5 n.). **15:** See Ex.22.31 n.

every person that eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean. ¹⁶ But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity."

18 And the LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to the people of Israel, I am the LORD your God. ³ You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴ You shall do my ordinances and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God. ⁵ You shall therefore keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing which a man shall live: I am the LORD.

⁶ "None of you shall approach any one near of kin to him to uncover nakedness. I am the LORD. ⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. ⁸ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. ⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or born abroad. ¹⁰ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your son's daughter or of your daughter's daughter, for their nakedness is your own nakedness. ¹¹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father, since she is your sister. ¹² You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's near kinswoman. ¹³ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's near kinswoman. ¹⁴ You shall not un-

cover the nakedness of your father's brother, that is, you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. ¹⁵ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness. ¹⁶ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; she is your brother's nakedness. ¹⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, and you shall not take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter to uncover her nakedness; they are your^f near kinswomen; it is wickedness. ¹⁸ And you shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is yet alive.

¹⁹ "You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. ²⁰ And you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, and defile yourself with her. ²¹ You shall not give any of your children to devote them by fire to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. ²² You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. ²³ And you shall not lie with any beast and defile yourself with it, neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it: it is perversion.

²⁴ "Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves; ²⁵ and the land became defiled, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. ²⁶ But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you ²⁷ (for all of these abominations the men of the land did, who were before you, so that the land became de-

f Gk: Heb lacks *your*

18.1-30: Forbidden sexual relations. 1-5: As a holy people, set apart for special relation to the LORD, Israel must not imitate the practices of other peoples (vv. 24-29; 11.44-45 n.). 6-18: An old list of twelve sexual prohibitions (compare the twelve curses in Dt. ch. 27). 16: The levirate marriage was an exception to this rule (see Gen.38.8 n.). 21: On the pagan rite of child sacrifice to *Molech*, the Ammonite deity (1 Kg.11.7), see Dt.18.10 n. 26-28: Although the laws

filed); ²⁸ lest the land vomit you out, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. ²⁹ For whoever shall do any of these abominations, the persons that do them shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰ So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs which were practiced before you, and never to defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God."

19 ² "Say to all the congregation of the people of Israel, You shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy. ³ Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. ⁴ Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God.

⁵ "When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. ⁶ It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, or on the morrow; and anything left over until the third day shall be burned with fire. ⁷ If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination; it will not be accepted, ⁸ and every one who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned a holy thing of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

⁹ "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you

shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

¹¹ "You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. ¹² And you shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

¹³ "You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴ You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

¹⁵ "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶ You shall not go up and down as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand forth against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

¹⁷ "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

¹⁹ "You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; nor shall there come upon you a garment of cloth made of two kinds of stuff.

²⁰ "If a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave, betrothed to another
g Heb blood

of Leviticus are placed in the ancient setting of Mount Sinai, this passage clearly presupposes a time after the conquest of Canaan (vv. 25,27).

19.1-37: The life of holiness. This chapter represents a fine blending of cultic requirements and ethical obligations, as expressed classically in the Ten Commandments (see vv. 9-10,13-16). **2:** The keynote of the chapter and of the so-called Holiness Code. The God who brought Israel out of Egypt (v. 36) has separated his people for a special covenant with him (18.1-5; 20.26; 22.31-33). Israel's holiness, therefore, is derived from the nation's being related to the holy God, not from any intrinsic quality of the people. **5-8:** See ch. 3. **17-18:** Previous ethical injunctions come to a climax in this law, the source of the "second" commandment quoted in the New Testament (Mk.12.31). *Neighbor* here means a fellow-Israelite (Ex.23.4-5); however, the law to *love your neighbor as yourself* is extended to include the sojourner in vv. 33-34. **19:** See Dt.22.9-11 n. **20-22:** The reason for this legal clemency is that the slave-woman is regarded

other man and not yet ransomed or given her freedom, an inquiry shall be held. They shall not be put to death, because she was not free; ²¹ but he shall bring a guilt offering for himself to the LORD, to the door of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering. ²² And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed; and the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him.

²³ "When you come into the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden; ²⁴ three years it shall be forbidden to you, it must not be eaten. ²⁵ And in the fourth year all their fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. ²⁶ But in the fifth year you may eat of their fruit, that they may yield more richly for you: I am the LORD your God.

²⁷ "You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not practice augury or witchcraft. ²⁸ You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard. ²⁹ You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh on account of the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the LORD.

³⁰ "Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full of wickedness. ³¹ You shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

³² "Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them out, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

³³ "You shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of an

old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

³⁴ "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. ³⁵ The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

³⁶ "You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. ³⁷ You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. ³⁸ And you shall observe all my statutes and all my ordinances, and do them: I am the LORD."

20 ¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to the people of Israel, Any man of the people of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, who gives any of his children to Molech shall be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones. ³ I myself will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given one of his children to Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning my holy name. ⁴ And if the people of the land do at all hide their eyes from that man, when he gives one of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, ⁵ then I will set my face against that man and against his family, and will cut them off from among their people, him and all who follow him in playing the harlot after Molech.

⁶ "If a person turns to mediums and wizards, playing the harlot after them, I will set my face against that person,

h Heb *their uncircumcision*

as another man's property, i.e. his concubine (Ex.21.7-11). **23-25:** This law may reflect the ancient custom of propitiating the fertility powers of the soil, although here the practice is redefined in terms of Israel's faith. **26-31:** Most of the laws in this section are protests against the practices of other peoples: magic and witchcraft (v. 26), heathen mourning customs (vv. 27-28; see 21.5 n.), sacred prostitution (v. 29), and necromancy (v. 31; 1 Sam. ch. 28; 2 Kg. 21.6; 23.24).

20.1-27: Penalties for violating the rules of the theocratic community. The severity of punishment is based on the conviction that Israel is to be a holy people, separated from others by its manner of life and worship (vv. 7-8,22-26). **2-5:** On Molech worship, see 18.21 n.

and will cut him off from among his people. ⁷ Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am the LORD your God. ⁸ Keep my statutes, and do them; I am the LORD who sanctify you. ⁹ For every one who curses his father or his mother shall be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother, his blood is upon him.

¹⁰ "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death. ¹¹ The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall be put to death, their blood is upon them. ¹² If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to death; they have committed incest, their blood is upon them. ¹³ If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them. ¹⁴ If a man takes a wife and her mother also, it is wickedness; they shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. ¹⁵ If a man lies with a beast, he shall be put to death; and you shall kill the beast. ¹⁶ If a woman approaches any beast and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the beast; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them.

¹⁷ "If a man takes his sister, a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a shameful thing, and they shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people; he has uncovered his sister's nakedness, he shall bear his iniquity. ¹⁸ If a man lies with a woman having her sickness, and uncovers her nakedness, he has made naked her fountain,

and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood; both of them shall be cut off from among their people. ¹⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's sister, for that is to make naked one's near kin; they shall bear their iniquity. ²⁰ If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they shall bear their sin, they shall die childless. ²¹ If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness, they shall be childless.

²² "You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and do them; that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. ²³ And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. ²⁴ But I have said to you, 'You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your God, who have separated you from the peoples. ²⁵ You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean beast and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. ²⁶ You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

²⁷ "A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them."

21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of

i Heb repeats *if a man commits adultery with the wife of*

9: See Ex.21.17 n. **10-21:** The death penalty is prescribed for the sexual offenses dealt with in ch. 18. **22-24:** This appeal is similar to the conclusion of the Covenant Code (Ex.23.23-33) and to the exhortations of Deuteronomy. **25:** See ch. 11. **26:** See 19.2 n. Much of the material in this chapter duplicates laws found elsewhere in the Holiness Code (e.g. chs. 18 and 19), indicating that the editor has compiled various independent traditions. **27:** See 19.31. *Put to death*, compare 1 Sam.28.9.

21.1-24: Instructions to the priests. Behavior of the priests is governed by the fact that they have a special status: they are *holy to their God* (v. 6), i.e. separated for a special divine service.

Aaron, and say to them that none of them shall defile himself for the dead among his people, ² except for his nearest of kin, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother, ³ or his virgin sister (who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may defile himself). ⁴ He shall not defile himself as a husband among his people and so profane himself. ⁵ They shall not make tonsures upon their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. ⁶ They shall be holy to their God, and not profane the name of their God; for they offer the offerings by fire to the LORD, the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. ⁷ They shall not marry a harlot or a woman who has been defiled; neither shall they marry a woman divorced from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God. ⁸ You shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy. ⁹ And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.

10 "The priest who is chief among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil is poured, and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose, nor rend his clothes; ¹¹ he shall not go in to any dead body, nor defile himself, even for his father or for his mother; ¹² neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD. ¹³ And he shall take a wife in her virginity. ¹⁴ A widow, or

one divorced, or a woman who has been defiled, or a harlot, these he shall not marry; but he shall take to wife a virgin of his own people, ¹⁵ that he may not profane his children among his people; for I am the LORD who sanctify him."

16 And the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷ "Say to Aaron, None of your descendants throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God. ¹⁸ For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, ¹⁹ or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, ²⁰ or a hunchback, or a dwarf, or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles; ²¹ no man of the descendants of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the LORD's offerings by fire; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. ²² He may eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy things, ²³ but he shall not come near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries; for I am the LORD who sanctify them." ²⁴ So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel.

22 And the LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell Aaron and his sons to keep away from the holy things of the people of Israel, which they dedicate to me, so that they may not profane my holy name: I am the LORD. ³ Say to them, 'If any one of all your descendants throughout your generations approaches the holy things, which the people of Israel dedicate to the LORD,

1-15: Rules concerning mourning and marriage. 1-3: Mourning rites were believed to be ritually defiling, owing to association with a dead body (10.6; Ezek.24.15-18). 5: 19.27-28. Shaving the head and bodily mutilation were common mourning customs in antiquity (Dt.14.1; Am.8.10; Is.22.12; Jer.16.6; Mic.1.16). 6: *The bread of their God* faintly echoes the ancient notion of sacrifice as the offering of food for the deity (see 2.2-3 n.); here the language is merely traditional. 10-12: See 10.6 n. 16-23: Just as the sacrificial offering must be unblemished (22.17-25), so the priest who offers it must be without bodily defect. Unnatural deformity or disfigurement is frowned upon, for man's body is God's creation, made in the divine image (Gen.5.1-3). 22.1-9: Priests may not partake of *the holy things*, i.e. the consecrated portion of the sacrifice which is their due (see 2.2-3 n.), while in a state of ritual uncleanness as defined in the laws of

while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from my presence: I am the LORD. ⁴ None of the line of Aaron who is a leper or suffers a discharge may eat of the holy things until he is clean. Whoever touches anything that is unclean through contact with the dead or a man who has had an emission of semen, ⁵ and whoever touches a creeping thing by which he may be made unclean or a man from whom he may take uncleanness, whatever his uncleanness may be— ⁶ the person who touches any such shall be unclean until the evening and shall not eat of the holy things unless he has bathed his body in water. ⁷ When the sun is down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat of the holy things, because such are his food. ⁸ That which dies of itself or is torn by beasts he shall not eat, defiling himself by it: I am the LORD. ⁹ They shall therefore keep my charge, lest they bear sin for it and die thereby when they profane it: I am the LORD who sanctify them.

¹⁰ "An outsider shall not eat of a holy thing. A sojourner of the priest's or a hired servant shall not eat of a holy thing; ¹¹ but if a priest buys a slave as his property for money, the slave may eat of it; and those that are born in his house may eat of his food. ¹² If a priest's daughter is married to an outsider she shall not eat of the offering of the holy things. ¹³ But if a priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and returns to her father's house, as in her youth, she may eat of her father's food; yet no outsider shall eat of it. ¹⁴ And if a man eats of a holy thing unwittingly, he shall add the fifth of its value to it, and give the holy thing to the priest. ¹⁵ The priests shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, which they offer to the LORD, ¹⁶ and so cause them to bear iniquity and guilt, by eating their holy

things: for I am the LORD who sanctify them."

¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸ "Say to Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel, When any one of the house of Israel or of the sojourners in Israel presents his offering, whether in payment of a vow or as a freewill offering which is offered to the LORD as a burnt offering, ¹⁹ to be accepted you shall offer a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. ²⁰ You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you. ²¹ And when any one offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, to fulfil a vow or as a freewill offering, from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it. ²² Animals blind or disabled or mutilated or having a discharge or an itch or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD or make of them an offering by fire upon the altar to the LORD. ²³ A bull or a lamb which has a part too long or too short you may present for a freewill offering; but for a votive offering it cannot be accepted. ²⁴ Any animal which has its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to the LORD or sacrifice within your land; ²⁵ neither shall you offer as the bread of your God any such animals gotten from a foreigner. Since there is a blemish in them, because of their mutilation, they will not be accepted for you."

²⁶ And the LORD said to Moses, ²⁷ "When a bull or sheep or goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day on it shall be acceptable as an offering by fire to the LORD. ²⁸ And whether the mother is a cow or a ewe, you shall not kill both her and her young in one day. ²⁹ And when you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted.

chs. 11–15. **10–16:** Further definition of who may eat the consecrated portions. *An outsider*, i.e. a layman outside the priest's immediate household (which included his slaves; see Ex. 12.43–49 n.). **17–25:** Directions about acceptable sacrifices.

³⁰ It shall be eaten on the same day, you shall leave none of it until morning: I am the LORD.

31 "So you shall keep my commandments and do them: I am the LORD. ³² And you shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the people of Israel; I am the LORD who sanctify you, ³³ who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the LORD."

23 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to the people of Israel, The appointed feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, my appointed feasts, are these. ³ Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation; you shall do no work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.

4 "These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them. ⁵ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening,^j is the LORD's passover. ⁶ And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to the LORD; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. ⁸ But you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD seven days; on the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work."

9 And the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁰ "Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest; ¹¹ and he shall wave

the sheaf before the LORD, that you may find acceptance; on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹² And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹³ And the cereal offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, to be offered by fire to the LORD, a pleasing odor; and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin. ¹⁴ And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

15 "And you shall count from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full weeks shall they be, ¹⁶ counting fifty days to the morrow after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a cereal offering of new grain to the LORD. ¹⁷ You shall bring from your dwellings two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah; they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, as first fruits to the LORD. ¹⁸ And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one young bull, and two rams; they shall be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their cereal offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD. ¹⁹ And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. ²⁰ And the priest shall wave

j Heb between the two evenings

23.1-44: The sacred calendar. 2: There shall be a proclamation by trumpets (Num.10.10) to announce the appointed feasts. 3: Ex.16.23. 4: The calendar of sacred feasts is paralleled in Ex.23.14-17; 34.22-24; Dt.16.1-17. 5-8: Passover and the feast of unleavened bread are treated here (as in other calendars) as two phases of one celebration (see Ex.12.14-20 n.). *The first month*, see Ex.12.2 n. 9-14: The offering of the first fruits (Dt.26.5-10) took place the day after the concluding sabbath of the feast of unleavened bread (v. 11; compare vv. 7-8), i.e. at the beginning of the barley harvest in April. 11: *Wave the sheaf*, see Ex.29.24 n. 15-21: Since the festival of weeks, celebrated at the time of the wheat harvest, was held fifty days after the feast of unleavened bread, it came to be called Pentecost (based on a Greek word meaning "fifty").

them with the bread of the first fruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs; they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹ And you shall make proclamation on the same day; you shall hold a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work: it is a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

²² "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

²³ And the LORD said to Moses, ²⁴ "Say to the people of Israel, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ You shall do no laborious work; and you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD."

²⁶ And the LORD said to Moses, ²⁷ "On the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present an offering by fire to the LORD. ²⁸ And you shall do no work on this same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹ For whoever is not afflicted on this same day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ And whoever does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ You shall do no work: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³² It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves; on the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your sabbath."

³³ And the LORD said to Moses, ³⁴ "Say to the people of Israel, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the feast of booths^k to the LORD. ³⁵ On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. ³⁶ Seven days you shall present offerings by fire to the LORD; on the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is a solemn assembly; you shall do no laborious work.

³⁷ "These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the LORD offerings by fire, burnt offerings and cereal offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day; ³⁸ besides the sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts, and besides all your votive offerings, and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.

³⁹ "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD seven days; on the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD seven days in the year; it is a statute for ever throughout your generations; you shall keep it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days; all that are native in Israel shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

k Or tabernacles

23-25: The festival of trumpets or New Year. This falls at the beginning of the seventh month (September-October), according to the ecclesiastical calendar (see Ex.12.2 n.). **26-32:** The day of atonement (ch. 16) occurs during the same month. **33-36** (supplemented in vv. 39-43): The feast of booths or thanksgiving was held at the time of the autumn ingathering. **37-38:** See further Num. chs. 28 and 29 for the sacrifices to be offered at the holy convocations.

24.1-23: Various priestly laws. **1-4:** Oil for the sanctuary lamp (Ex.27.20-21). **5-9:** The

44 Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the LORD.

24 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning continually. ³ Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD continually; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations. ⁴ He shall keep the lamps in order upon the lampstand of pure gold before the LORD continually.

⁵ "And you shall take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes of it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. ⁶ And you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the table of pure gold. ⁷ And you shall put pure frankincense with each row, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion to be offered by fire to the LORD. ⁸ Every sabbath day Aaron shall set it in order before the LORD continually on behalf of the people of Israel as a covenant for ever. ⁹ And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the offerings by fire to the LORD, a perpetual due."

¹⁰ Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel; and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel quarreled in the camp, ¹¹ and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. And they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelo'mith, the daughter of

Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. ¹² And they put him in custody, till the will of the LORD should be declared to them.

¹³ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁴ "Bring out of the camp him who cursed; and let all who heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. ¹⁵ And say to the people of Israel, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. ¹⁶ He who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him; the sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. ¹⁷ He who kills a man shall be put to death. ¹⁸ He who kills a beast shall make it good, life for life. ¹⁹ When a man causes a disfigurement in his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has disfigured a man, he shall be disfigured. ²¹ He who kills a beast shall make it good; and he who kills a man shall be put to death. ²² You shall have one law for the sojourner and for the native; for I am the LORD your God." ²³ So Moses spoke to the people of Israel; and they brought him who had cursed out of the camp, and stoned him with stones. Thus the people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

25 The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, ² "Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. ³ Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits; ⁴ but in the

bread of the Presence, see Ex.25.23-30. **10-14:** This incident serves as a setting for the laws that follow (see v. 23). *The Name*, a substitute for the sacred name of Israel's God (see Ex. 3.14 n.). On cursing God, see Ex.20.7; 22.28. **12:** Compare Num.15.32-36. **13:** It is held that blasphemy pollutes the community. Stoning, a communal mode of execution, is the means of purifying the evil from the midst of the people (Dt.17.2-7; 21.18-21). **15-22:** An independent set of laws. **20:** For the *lex talionis* (the law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"), see Ex.21.22-25 n.

25.1-55: The sabbatical year and the year of jubilee. These laws attempt to prevent economic exploitation by stressing that the ownership of the land is vested in God, rather than man. **2-7:** On the seventh year *the land shall keep a sabbath*, i.e. lie fallow (Ex.23.10-11). Although this custom may be rooted ultimately in appeasement of the powers of the soil (see 19.23-25 n.),

seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. ⁵ What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. ⁶ The sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired servant and the sojourner who lives with you; ⁷ for your cattle also and for the beasts that are in your land all its yield shall be for food.

⁸ "And you shall count seven weeks¹ of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years. ⁹ Then you shall send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. ¹⁰ And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his family. ¹¹ A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you; in it you shall neither sow, nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. ¹² For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat what it yields out of the field.

¹³ "In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property. ¹⁴ And

if you sell to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. ¹⁵ According to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years for crops he shall sell to you. ¹⁶ If the years are many you shall increase the price, and if the years are few you shall diminish the price, for it is the number of the crops that he is selling to you. ¹⁷ You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God.

¹⁸ "Therefore you shall do my statutes, and keep my ordinances and perform them; so you will dwell in the land securely. ¹⁹ The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell in it securely. ²⁰ And if you say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?' ²¹ I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, so that it will bring forth fruit for three years. ²² When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating old produce; until the ninth year, when its produce comes in, you shall eat the old. ²³ The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me. ²⁴ And in all the country you possess, you shall grant a redemption of the land.

²⁵ "If your brother becomes poor, and sells part of his property, then his next of kin shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. ²⁶ If a man has

¹ Or *sabbaths*

here it signifies that the LORD owns the land and gives it to his people for stewardship (v. 2). **6-7:** These verses appear to modify the law by saying that, although there shall be no reaping or storing (v. 5), the crop that grows of itself can be taken (compare v. 12). Evidently it was difficult to enforce the law (see 26.34-35). It was enforced, however, in the Maccabean period (1 Macc.6.49,53). **8-24:** After seven sabbatical years, i.e. on the fiftieth year, comes the year of jubilee, named after the Hebrew word "yobhel" (ram's horn) which was blown in proclamation. **10:** Leases are to expire and every man is to return to his ancestral estate. **13-17:** Although an Israelite shall not sell his property in perpetuity (v. 23), he may lease it for farming. **15-16:** The rent is to be reckoned at the approximated value of the crops in the remaining years of the jubilee period. **14:** *Neighbor*, see 19.17-18 n. **20-22:** A law dealing with the sabbatical years that fall during the jubilee period. **23:** A statement of the theological premise of the program: Israelites are *strangers and sojourners* on land which does not belong to them by right but which the LORD has given them as an inheritance. Thus the land is not private property, to be bought and sold speculatively. Although there is no evidence that the jubilee program was ever carried out, the law opposes foreign conceptions of property which resulted in the swallow-

no one to redeem it, and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it, ²⁷ let him reckon the years since he sold it and pay back the overpayment to the man to whom he sold it; and he shall return to his property. ²⁸ But if he has not sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the year of jubilee; in the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.

²⁹ "If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, he may redeem it within a whole year after its sale; for a full year he shall have the right of redemption. ³⁰ If it is not redeemed within a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity to him who bought it, throughout his generations; it shall not be released in the jubilee. ³¹ But the houses of the villages which have no wall around them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the jubilee. ³² Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. ³³ And if one of the Levites does not exercise^m his right of redemption, then the house that was sold in a city of their possession shall be released in the jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the people of Israel. ³⁴ But the fields of common land belonging to their cities may not be sold; for that is their perpetual possession.

³⁵ "And if your brother becomes poor, and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall maintain him; as a stranger and a sojourner he shall live

with you. ³⁶ Take no interest from him or increase, but fear your God; that your brother may live beside you. ³⁷ You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. ³⁸ I am the LORD your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.

³⁹ "And if your brother becomes poor beside you, and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: ⁴⁰ he shall be with you as a hired servant and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee; ⁴¹ then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own family, and return to the possession of his fathers. ⁴² For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. ⁴³ You shall not rule over him with harshness, but shall fear your God. ⁴⁴ As for your male and female slaves whom you may have: you may buy male and female slaves from among the nations that are round about you. ⁴⁵ You may also buy from among the strangers who sojourn with you and their families that are with you, who have been born in your land; and they may be your property. ⁴⁶ You may bequeath them to your sons after you, to inherit as a possession for ever; you may make slaves of them, but over your brethren the people of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with harshness.

⁴⁷ "If a stranger or sojourner with you becomes rich, and your brother beside him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner with you, or to a member of the stranger's family, ⁴⁸ then after he is sold he may

m Compare Vg: Heb exercises

ing up of ancestral holdings (1 Kg.21.3; Is.5.8). **25-55:** Laws dealing with property and its redemption. **25-28:** Even before the year of jubilee the land may be redeemed. **25:** The *next of kin* (lit., "redeemer") is the relative who upholds the rights of a family member, e.g. by blood revenge (Num.35.12) or the redemption of property (Ru. ch. 4). **29-34:** An exception to cover the case of urban houses as distinguished from houses in villages. **32-34:** Num.35.1-8. **35-38:** See Ex.22.25 n. **39-55:** An Israelite may sell himself as a hired servant but shall never become a slave. **40:** Compare Ex.21.1-6; Dt.15.12-18. **44-46:** It is permissible, however, to make slaves of non-Israelites, since, according to the ancient way of thinking, they are outside the bound-

be redeemed; one of his brothers may redeem him,⁴⁹ or his uncle, or his cousin may redeem him, or a near kinsman belonging to his family may redeem him; or if he grows rich he may redeem himself.⁵⁰ He shall reckon with him who bought him from the year when he sold himself to him until the year of jubilee, and the price of his release shall be according to the number of years; the time he was with his owner shall be rated as the time of a hired servant.⁵¹ If there are still many years, according to them he shall refund out of the price paid for him the price for his redemption.⁵² If there remain but a few years until the year of jubilee, he shall make a reckoning with him; according to the years of service due from him he shall refund the money for his redemption.⁵³ As a servant hired year by year shall he be with him; he shall not rule with harshness over him in your sight.⁵⁴ And if he is not redeemed by these means, then he shall be released in the year of jubilee, he and his children with him.⁵⁵ For to me the people of Israel are servants, they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

26 "You shall make for yourselves no idols and erect no graven image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land, to bow down to them; for I am the LORD your God.² You shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

³ "If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them,⁴ then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.⁵ And your threshing shall last to the time of vin-

tage, and the vintage shall last to the time for sowing; and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land securely.⁶ And I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; and I will remove evil beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land.⁷ And you shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.⁸ Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.⁹ And I will have regard for you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and will confirm my covenant with you.¹⁰ And you shall eat old store long kept, and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new.¹¹ And I will make my abode among you, and my soul shall not abhor you.¹² And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people.¹³ I am the LORD your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; and I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

¹⁴ "But if you will not hearken to me, and will not do all these commandments,¹⁵ if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my ordinances, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant,¹⁶ I will do this to you: I will appoint over you sudden terror, consumption, and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it;¹⁷ I will set my face against you, and you shall be smitten before your enemies; those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you.¹⁸ And if in spite of this you will not

aries of the covenant community. **48-49:** See v. 25 n. **55:** This verse gives the theological basis for the prohibition against enslaving Israelites (vv. 42-43).

26.1-46: The two ways. The Holiness Code (chs. 17-26), conceived as the LORD's address to the people through Moses (17.1-2), concludes with divine warnings and promises. See also the concluding addresses in Ex.23.20-33 and Dt. ch. 28. **1:** A prohibition against the cultic objects of Canaanite religion (see Ex.34.13 n.). **11-13:** The fundamental theme of the Holiness Code: the holy God has come to dwell in the midst of a sinful people. **12:** Ex.6.7.

hearken to me, then I will chastise you again sevenfold for your sins, ¹⁹ and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like brass; ²⁰ and your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

21 "Then if you walk contrary to me, and will not hearken to me, I will bring more plagues upon you, sevenfold as many as your sins. ²² And I will let loose the wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, so that your ways shall become desolate.

23 "And if by this discipline you are not turned to me, but walk contrary to me, ²⁴ then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will smite you sevenfold for your sins. ²⁵ And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute vengeance for the covenant; and if you gather within your cities I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. ²⁶ When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and shall deliver your bread again by weight; and you shall eat, and not be satisfied.

27 "And if in spite of this you will not hearken to me, but walk contrary to me, ²⁸ then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and chastise you myself sevenfold for your sins. ²⁹ You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. ³⁰ And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols; and my soul will abhor you. ³¹ And I will lay your cities waste, and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing

odors. ³² And I will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be astonished at it. ³³ And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you; and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

34 "Then the land shall enjoy" its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy" its sabbaths. ³⁵ As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest which it had not in your sabbaths when you dwelt upon it. ³⁶ And as for those of you that are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a driven leaf shall put them to flight, and they shall flee as one flees from the sword, and they shall fall when none pursues. ³⁷ They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though none pursues; and you shall have no power to stand before your enemies. ³⁸ And you shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. ³⁹ And those of you that are left shall pine away in your enemies' lands because of their iniquity; and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall pine away like them.

40 "But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery which they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, ⁴¹ so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity; ⁴² then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. ⁴³ But the land shall be left

n Or pay for

26: In the time of scarcity ten women will have to bake in one oven, rather than each in her own house. 29: Dt.28.53-57. 32-33: These and following verses indicate familiarity with the policy of deporting conquered peoples, a policy used effectively by the Assyrians (2 Kg. ch. 17), and anticipate the conquest of Judah and the exile of the people into Babylonia in 597-587 B.C. (vv. 34,38,39,41,43-44). 34-35: See 25.6-7 n. 41: *Uncircumcised heart*, a heart that is sealed or unresponsive to the LORD's will (Jer.4.4).

by them, and enjoy" its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them; and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my ordinances, and their soul abhorred my statutes. ⁴⁴ Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God; ⁴⁵ but I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD."

46 These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD made between him and the people of Israel on Mount Sinai by Moses.

27 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to the people of Israel, When a man makes a special vow of persons to the LORD at your valuation, ³ then your valuation of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old shall be fifty shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. ⁴ If the person is a female, your valuation shall be thirty shekels. ⁵ If the person is from five years old up to twenty years old, your valuation shall be for a male twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels. ⁶ If the person is from a month old up to five years old, your valuation shall be for a male five shekels of silver, and for a female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver. ⁷ And if the person is sixty years old and upward, then your valuation for a male shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels. ⁸ And if a man is too poor to pay your valuation, then he shall bring the person before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the ability of him who vowed the priest shall value him.

9 "If it is an animal such as men

offer as an offering to the LORD, all of such that any man gives to the LORD is holy. ¹⁰ He shall not substitute anything for it or exchange it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good; and if he makes any exchange of beast for beast, then both it and that for which it is exchanged shall be holy. ¹¹ And if it is an unclean animal such as is not offered as an offering to the LORD, then the man shall bring the animal before the priest, ¹² and the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. ¹³ But if he wishes to redeem it, he shall add a fifth to the valuation.

14 "When a man dedicates his house to be holy to the LORD, the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. ¹⁵ And if he who dedicates it wishes to redeem his house, he shall add a fifth of the valuation in money to it, and it shall be his.

16 "If a man dedicates to the LORD part of the land which is his by inheritance, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it; a sowing of a homer of barley shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver. ¹⁷ If he dedicates his field from the year of jubilee, it shall stand at your full valuation; ¹⁸ but if he dedicates his field after the jubilee, then the priest shall compute the money-value for it according to the years that remain until the year of jubilee, and a deduction shall be made from your valuation. ¹⁹ And if he who dedicates the field wishes to redeem it, then he shall add a fifth of the valuation in money to it, and it shall remain his. ²⁰ But if he does not wish to redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more; ²¹ but the field, when it is released in the jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, as a field

n Or pay for

27.1-34: An appendix dealing with religious vows (compare Pss.56.12; 116.14). See further Num. ch. 30. 1-8: Persons dedicated to the LORD's service (compare 1 Sam.1.11) may be freed from the vow by the payment of a monetary substitute. 3: *The shekel of the sanctuary*, see Ex.30.13 n. 9-13: If an animal, appropriate for sacrifice, is vowed, it cannot be redeemed. 14-25: Houses and lands, vowed to the LORD, are redeemable. 17-18: On this manner of

that has been devoted; the priest shall be in possession of it. ²² If he dedicates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not a part of his possession by inheritance, ²³ then the priest shall compute the valuation for it up to the year of jubilee, and the man shall give the amount of the valuation on that day as a holy thing to the LORD. ²⁴ In the year of jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to whom the land belongs as a possession by inheritance. ²⁵ Every valuation shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall make a shekel.

26 "But a firstling of animals, which as a firstling belongs to the LORD, no man may dedicate; whether ox or sheep, it is the LORD's. ²⁷ And if it is an unclean animal, then he shall buy it back at your valuation, and add a fifth to it; or, if it is not redeemed, it shall be sold at your valuation.

28 "But no devoted thing that a

man devotes to the LORD, of anything that he has, whether of man or beast, or of his inherited field, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the LORD. ²⁹ No one devoted, who is to be utterly destroyed from among men, shall be ransomed; he shall be put to death.

30 "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. ³¹ If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. ³² And all the tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD. ³³ A man shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, neither shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it, then both it and that for which it is exchanged shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed."

34 These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Sinai.

valuation, see 25.15-16. **21:** *Devoted*, i.e. set apart as belonging to the LORD. Booty taken in holy war was devoted and could not be appropriated for common use (Jos.6.19). **26:** Firstlings of clean animals cannot be dedicated since they already belong to the LORD (see Ex.13.2 n.). **28:** *Devoted thing*, see v. 21 n. **29:** Compare 1 Sam. ch. 15. **30-33:** On tithes (Mal.3.8-10). **32-33:** The words *pass under the herdsman's staff* refer to the manner of counting animals (Jer.33.13).

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES COMMONLY CALLED NUMBERS

The title of this book in the Hebrew Bible, *In the Wilderness*, is more fitting than *Numbers*, which refers merely to the opening account of the numbering of the people. Actually, the census, along with instructions for encampment and for march, belongs to the larger theme of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 7). Accordingly, the book falls into the following sections: (1) Preparations for departure from Sinai (1.1–10.10); (2) the journey to Kadesh, from which point an abortive attack upon southern Canaan was made (10.11–21.13); and (3) the journey from Kadesh via Transjordan for the purpose of approaching Canaan from the east (21.14–36.13).

Of the traditional forty years in the wilderness (33.38; Am.5.25), the greatest part was spent at the oasis known as Kadesh-barnea. According to priestly chronology, one year elapsed from the Exodus to the erection of the tabernacle (Ex.40.2); the legislation of Leviticus covered one month (Num.1.1); nineteen days after the census Israel left Sinai (10.11). Moses' farewell address was given at the end of the fortieth year (Dt.1.3). With time allowed for the march from Kadesh to the plains of Moab, this means that Israel spent well over thirty-five years at Kadesh.

Many of the traditions portray Israel's murmuring, occasioned by the people's precarious existence in the wilderness. The people are pictured as faithless, rebellious, and blind to God's signs. Yet the same traditions are infused with the conviction that God was marvelously guiding, sustaining, and disciplining his people so that they might know their utter dependence upon him and thus be prepared for their historical pilgrimage.

THE LORD SPOKE TO MOSES IN THE wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ² "Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, by families, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male, head by head; ³ from twenty years old and upward, all in Israel who are able to go forth to war, you and Aaron shall number them, company by company. ⁴ And there shall be with you a man from each tribe, each man being the head of the house of his fathers. ⁵ And these are the names of the men who shall attend you. From Reuben, Eli'zur the son of Shed'e'ur; ⁶ from Sim-

eon, Shelu'mi-el the son of Zurishad'dai; ⁷ from Judah, Nahshon the son of Ammin'adab; ⁸ from Is'sachar, Nathan'el the son of Zu'ar; ⁹ from Zeb'ulun, Eli'ab the son of Helon; ¹⁰ from the sons of Joseph, from E'phraim, Eli'shama the son of Ammi'hud, and from Manas'seh, Gama'liel the son of Pedah'zur; ¹¹ from Benjamin, Abi'dan the son of Gideo'ni; ¹² from Dan, Ahi-e'zer the son of Ammishad'dai; ¹³ from Asher, Pa'giel the son of Ochron; ¹⁴ from Gad, Eli'asaph the son of Deu'el; ¹⁵ from Naph'tali, Ahi'ra the son of Enan." ¹⁶ These were the ones chosen from the congregation, the leaders of their ancestral tribes, the heads of the clans of Israel.

¹⁷ Moses and Aaron took these men

1.1–54: Census of the tribes. Moses is commanded to number all Israelites, making an exception of the tribe of Levi. **1:** One month had elapsed since the construction of the tabernacle (Ex.40.2,17). **2–4:** See Ex.30.11–12 n. Military service was one of the chief duties involved in membership in the tribal assembly (ch. 32). Strictly, a tribe included a number of *families* or clans, and a clan included several *fathers' houses* or family groups. **5–15:** This old name-list reflects the twelve-tribe organization instituted in Joshua's time (Jos. ch. 24). No longer a landed tribe, Levi is not mentioned here (see Ex.28.1–5 n.), but is later assigned a priestly role (vv. 47–54). The twelvefold pattern is maintained by counting the "house of Joseph" as two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. On the mention of Ephraim before Manasseh, see Gen.48.13–

who have been named,¹⁸ and on the first day of the second month, they assembled the whole congregation together, who registered themselves by families, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and upward, head by head,¹⁹ as the LORD commanded Moses. So he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

20 The people of Reuben, Israel's first-born, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war:²¹ the number of the tribe of Reuben was forty-six thousand five hundred.

22 Of the people of Simeon, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, those of them that were numbered, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war:²³ the number of the tribe of Simeon was fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

24 Of the people of Gad, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war:²⁵ the number of the tribe of Gad was forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.

26 Of the people of Judah, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war:²⁷ the number of the tribe of Judah was seventy-four thousand six hundred.

28 Of the people of Is'sachar, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war:²⁹ the number of the tribe of Is'sachar was fifty-four thousand four hundred.

30 Of the people of Zeb'ulun, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war:³¹ the number of the tribe of Zeb'ulun was fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

32 Of the people of Joseph, namely, of the people of E'phraim, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war:³³ the number of the tribe of E'phraim was forty thousand five hundred.

34 Of the people of Manas'seh, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war:³⁵ the number of the tribe of Manas'seh was thirty-two thousand two hundred.

36 Of the people of Benjamin, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war:³⁷ the number of the tribe of Benjamin was thirty-five thousand four hundred.

38 Of the people of Dan, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the num-

14 n. and contrast 26.28; 34.23-24. 17-46: The census total of 603,550 (compare the slightly lower figure in 26.51) is extremely high (see Ex.12.37 n.). It has been suggested that the Hebrew word translated "thousand" (vv. 21,23, etc.) is an old term for a subsection of a tribe (31.14), based on the procedures for military muster employed by other ancient peoples, and that the original number follows "thousand" in each case, e.g. Reuben had forty-six tribal subsections with a total of five hundred men (v. 21). This reduces the total to 5,550. It is alleged that the present impossibly high figures were read back from the time of the monarchy when the military unit actually included one thousand men. In any case, priestly tradition about the numerous population (see 11.21 n.) is based on the belief that the LORD marvelously increased Abraham's

ber of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war: ³⁹ the number of the tribe of Dan was sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

40 Of the people of Asher, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war: ⁴¹ the number of the tribe of Asher was forty-one thousand five hundred.

42 Of the people of Naph'tali, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war: ⁴³ the number of the tribe of Naph'tali was fifty-three thousand four hundred.

44 These are those who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered with the help of the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each representing his fathers' house. ⁴⁵ So the whole number of the people of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war in Israel— ⁴⁶ their whole number was six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

47 But the Levites were not numbered by their ancestral tribe along with them. ⁴⁸ For the LORD said to Moses, ⁴⁹ "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, and you shall not take a census of them among the people of Israel; ⁵⁰ but appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings, and over all that belongs to it; they are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings,

and they shall tend it, and shall encamp around the tabernacle. ⁵¹ When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And if any one else comes near, he shall be put to death. ⁵² The people of Israel shall pitch their tents by their companies, every man by his own camp and every man by his own standard; ⁵³ but the Levites shall encamp around the tabernacle of the testimony, that there may be no wrath upon the congregation of the people of Israel; and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony." ⁵⁴ Thus did the people of Israel; they did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

2 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ² "The people of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard, with the ensigns of their fathers' houses; they shall encamp facing the tent of meeting on every side. ³ Those to encamp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah by their companies, the leader of the people of Judah being Nahshon the son of Ammin'adab, ⁴ his host as numbered being seventy-four thousand six hundred. ⁵ Those to encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Is'sachar, the leader of the people of Is'sachar being Nethan'el the son of Zu'ar, ⁶ his host as numbered being fifty-four thousand four hundred. ⁷ Then the tribe of Zeb'ulun, the leader of the people of Zeb'ulun being Eli'ab the son of Helon, ⁸ his host as numbered being fifty-seven thousand four hundred. ⁹ The whole number of the camp of Judah, by their companies,

descendants (see Ex.1.7 n.) and miraculously supported this great people in the wilderness. 47-54: See 3.5-10 n. 50: *Testimony*, see Ex.16.33-34 n.

2.1-34: The arrangement of the tribes while encamped or on the march (compare 10.13-28). **2:** Perhaps with the feast of tabernacles in mind (Lev.23.33-36), the priestly writer conceives the congregation as arranged symmetrically around the tent of meeting. In the oldest tradition, the tent was not in the center but on the outside of the camp (Ex.33.7-11). **3-31: The Levites** are to encamp immediately around the tabernacle court (Ex.27.9-19), to protect and transport the sacred shrine (v. 17; 1.47-54). Farther out the twelve tribes are to encamp, three on each side. The arrangement expresses the idea of the tabernacling presence of the LORD in the midst of his people (Ex.25.8). **3-4:** Judah is assigned the favored position, on the east of the

is a hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred. They shall set out first on the march.

10 "On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their companies, the leader of the people of Reuben being Eli'zur the son of Shed'eur, ¹¹ his host as numbered being forty-six thousand five hundred. ¹² And those to encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon, the leader of the people of Simeon being Shelu'mi-el the son of Zurishad'dai, ¹³ his host as numbered being fifty-nine thousand three hundred. ¹⁴ Then the tribe of Gad, the leader of the people of Gad being Eli'asaph the son of Reu'el, ¹⁵ his host as numbered being forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty. ¹⁶ The whole number of the camp of Reuben, by their companies, is a hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty. They shall set out second.

17 "Then the tent of meeting shall set out, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; as they encamp, so shall they set out, each in position, standard by standard.

18 "On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of E'phraim by their companies, the leader of the people of E'phraim being Eli'shama the son of Ammi'hud, ¹⁹ his host as numbered being forty thousand five hundred. ²⁰ And next to him shall be the tribe of Manas'seh, the leader of the people of Manas'seh being Gama'liel the son of Pedah'zur, ²¹ his host as numbered being thirty-two thousand two hundred. ²² Then the tribe of Benjamin, the leader of the people of Benjamin being Abi'dan the son of Gideo'ni, ²³ his host as numbered being thirty-five thousand four hundred. ²⁴ The whole number of the camp of E'phraim, by their companies, is a hundred and eight thousand one hundred.

They shall set out third on the march.

25 "On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their companies, the leader of the people of Dan being Ahi-e'zer the son of Ammishad'dai, ²⁶ his host as numbered being sixty-two thousand seven hundred. ²⁷ And those to encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, the leader of the people of Asher being Pa'giel the son of Ochran, ²⁸ his host as numbered being forty-one thousand five hundred. ²⁹ Then the tribe of Naph'tali, the leader of the people of Naph'tali being Ahi'ra the son of Enan, ³⁰ his host as numbered being fifty-three thousand four hundred. ³¹ The whole number of the camp of Dan is a hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred. They shall set out last, standard by standard."

32 These are the people of Israel as numbered by their fathers' houses; all in the camps who were numbered by their companies were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. ³³ But the Levites were not numbered among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses.

34 Thus did the people of Israel. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they encamped by their standards, and so they set out, every one in his family, according to his fathers' house.

3 These are the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. ² These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the first-born, and Abi'hu, Elea'zar, and Ith'amar; ³ these are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to minister in the priest's office. ⁴ But Nadab and Abi'hu died before the LORD when they offered unholy fire before the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So

camp. 9: Each division marches in assigned order, with Judah in the lead. 18-24: On Ephraim's position of leadership, see 1.5-15 n. 17: During the march, the Levites are to be flanked by two divisions on both the front and the rear.

3.1-51: The Levites are set apart for special service. 1-3: Ex.6.23-25. 4: Lev. ch. 10. 5-10:

Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father.

5 And the LORD said to Moses, ⁶ "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him. ⁷ They shall perform duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle; ⁸ they shall have charge of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and attend to the duties for the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. ⁹ And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel. ¹⁰ And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but if any one else comes near, he shall be put to death."

11 And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every first-born that opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine, ¹³ for all the first-born are mine; on the day that I slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the first-born in Israel, both of man and of beast; they shall be mine: I am the LORD."

14 And the LORD said to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, ¹⁵ "Number the sons of Levi, by fathers' houses and by families; every male from a month old and upward you shall number." ¹⁶ So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. ¹⁷ And these were the sons of Levi by their names:

Gershon and Kohath and Merari. ¹⁸ And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shim'e-i. ¹⁹ And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ²⁰ And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites, by their fathers' houses.

21 Of Gershon were the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shim'e-ites; these were the families of the Gershonites. ²² Their number according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward was^a seven thousand five hundred. ²³ The families of the Gershonites were to encamp behind the tabernacle on the west, ²⁴ with Eli'asaph, the son of La'el as head of the fathers' house of the Gershonites. ²⁵ And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting was to be the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the door of the tent of meeting, ²⁶ the hangings of the court, the screen for the door of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its cords; all the service pertaining to these.

27 Of Kohath were the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izhar'ites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these are the families of the Kohathites. ²⁸ According to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, there were eight thousand six hundred, attending to the duties of the sanctuary. ²⁹ The families of the sons of Kohath were to encamp on the

^a Heb their number was

Moses and Aaron both belong to the tribe of Levi. Within the larger circle of Levites, however, a distinction is made between *Aaron and his sons* and other Levites (see Ex.28.1-5 n.). Aaron's descendants exercise the chief priestly functions in the sanctuary, while the other Levites are given to the Aaronic order as priestly assistants. **11-13:** A reinterpretation of the ancient law found in Ex.13.2; 22.29b-30; 34.19-20. Instead of having to go into life-long religious service, the first-born are redeemed by a "sacrifice" (see Ex.13.13 n.), for the LORD claims the Levites in their stead (Num.8.15-19). **14-39:** 1.47-54; ch. 4. **15:** The Levitical census is not for military purposes (compare 1.2-3) but is associated with the first-born who are redeemable from the age of one month (vv. 40-51). **17-19:** For the families (clans) of the Levites, see Ex.6.16-19. **25-26:** 4.21-28. The Gershonites have custody over the tent covering (Ex.26.7-14), the screen for the tent door (Ex.26.36), the hangings of the court (Ex.27.9), the screen for the court door (Ex.

south side of the tabernacle, ³⁰ with Eli-za'phan the son of Uz'ziel as head of the fathers' house of the families of the Ko'hathites. ³¹ And their charge was to be the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary with which the priests minister, and the screen; all the service pertaining to these. ³² And Elea'zar the son of Aaron the priest was to be chief over the leaders of the Levites, and to have oversight of those who had charge of the sanctuary.

33 Of Merar'i were the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites: these are the families of Merar'i. ³⁴ Their number according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward was six thousand two hundred. ³⁵ And the head of the fathers' house of the families of Merar'i was Zu'riel the son of Ab'ihail; they were to encamp on the north side of the tabernacle. ³⁶ And the appointed charge of the sons of Merar'i was to be the frames of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the bases, and all their accessories; all the service pertaining to these; ³⁷ also the pillars of the court round about, with their bases and pegs and cords.

38 And those to encamp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, were Moses and Aaron and his sons, having charge of the rites within the sanctuary, whatever had to be done for the people of Israel; and any one else who came near was to be put to death. ³⁹ All who were numbered of the

Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, by families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty-two thousand.

40 And the LORD said to Moses, "Number all the first-born males of the people of Israel, from a month old and upward, taking their number by names. ⁴¹ And you shall take the Levites for me—I am the LORD—instead of all the first-born among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the people of Israel." ⁴² So Moses numbered all the first-born among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. ⁴³ And all the first-born males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as numbered were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.

44 And the LORD said to Moses, ⁴⁵ "Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. ⁴⁶ And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the first-born of the people of Israel, over and above the number of the male Levites, ⁴⁷ you shall take five shekels apiece; reckoning by the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of twenty gerahs, you shall take them, ⁴⁸ and give the money by which the excess number of them is redeemed to Aaron and his sons." ⁴⁹ So Moses took the redemption money from those

27.16). 31-32: 4.4-15. The Kohathites have charge of the most holy objects (4.4-20), i.e. the ark, the table for the bread of the Presence, the lampstand (Ex. ch. 25), the bronze and gold altars (Ex.27.1-8; 30.1-10), the sacred vessels (Ex.30.17-21; 31.7-11), and the veil of the screen (Num.4.5; Ex.26.31-35). Eleazar, Aaron's oldest surviving son. 36-37: 4.29-33. The Merarites are responsible for the tabernacle framework (Ex.26.15-30) and the supports for the court (Ex.27.9-19). 38: Aaron and his sons encamp on the east, the favored location (see 2.3-4 n.), symbolizing their priestly pre-eminence. Any one else (3.10), i.e. a layman. 39: The numbers given in ch. 3 actually total 22,300. 40-51: Another Israelite census is taken to determine the number of first-born males, in contrast to men of military age (1.2-3). 41: See 3.11-13 n. The substitution of Levites' cattle for the people's firstlings of cattle modifies the law of the first-born even further. 43: A tally disclosed an excess of 273 Israelite first-born over the number of Levites (but see v. 39 n.). 46-48: Since the Levites were a ransom for Israelite males on a one to one basis, the additional males had to be redeemed by monetary payment. The shekel of the sanctuary, see Ex.30.13 n.

who were over and above those redeemed by the Levites; ⁵⁰ from the first-born of the people of Israel he took the money, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels, reckoned by the shekel of the sanctuary; ⁵¹ and Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

4 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ² "Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families and their fathers' houses, ³ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, all who can enter the service, to do the work in the tent of meeting. ⁴ This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting: the most holy things. ⁵ When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen, and cover the ark of the testimony with it; ⁶ then they shall put on it a covering of goatskin, and spread over that a cloth all of blue, and shall put in its poles. ⁷ And over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put upon it the plates, the dishes for incense, the bowls, and the flagons for the drink offering; the continual bread also shall be on it; ⁸ then they shall spread over them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of goatskin, and shall put in its poles. ⁹ And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the lampstand for the light, with its lamps, its snuffers, its trays, and all the vessels for oil with which it is supplied: ¹⁰ and they shall put it with all its utensils in a covering of goatskin and put it upon the carrying frame. ¹¹ And over the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of goatskin, and shall put in

its poles; ¹² and they shall take all the vessels of the service which are used in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of goatskin, and put them on the carrying frame. ¹³ And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it; ¹⁴ and they shall put on it all the utensils of the altar, which are used for the service there, the firepans, the forks, the shovels, and the basins, all the utensils of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of goatskin, and shall put in its poles. ¹⁵ And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

¹⁶ "And Elea'zar the son of Aaron the priest shall have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the continual cereal offering, and the anointing oil, with the oversight of all the tabernacle and all that is in it, of the sanctuary and its vessels."

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ¹⁸ "Let not the tribe of the families of the Ko'hathites be destroyed from among the Levites; ¹⁹ but deal thus with them, that they may live and not die when they come near to the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint them each to his task and to his burden, ²⁰ but they shall not go in to look upon the holy things even for a moment, lest they die."

²¹ The LORD said to Moses, ²² "Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their families and their

4.1-49: Another Levitical census. **2-3:** This census, in contrast with 3.15, is to determine the number of Levites of the age required for the priestly duties (compare 8.23-25) which are defined in vv. 4-33. **4-20:** The Kohathites have a special distinction among the Levites, for they have charge of the *most holy things* and are therefore under the immediate supervision of Eleazar (see 3.31-32 n.). **5:** *The veil of the screen*, Ex.26.31-35. **7:** *The continual bread*, i.e. the bread of the Presence which is continually on the table (Ex.25.30). **15-20:** The precautions taken by Aaron and his sons are explained by the fact that the Kohathites must not see or touch the

fathers' houses; ²³ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall number them, all who can enter for service, to do the work in the tent of meeting. ²⁴ This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and bearing burdens: ²⁵ they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tent of meeting with its covering, and the covering of goatskin that is on top of it, and the screen for the door of the tent of meeting, ²⁶ and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the entrance of the gate of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, and all the equipment for their service; and they shall do all that needs to be done with regard to them. ²⁷ All the service of the sons of the Gershonites shall be at the command of Aaron and his sons, in all that they are to carry, and in all that they have to do; and you shall assign to their charge all that they are to carry. ²⁸ This is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting, and their work is to be under the oversight of Ith'amar the son of Aaron the priest.

²⁹ "As for the sons of Merar'i, you shall number them by their families and their fathers' houses; ³⁰ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall number them, every one that can enter the service, to do the work of the tent of meeting. ³¹ And this is what they are charged to carry, as the whole of their service in the tent of meeting: the frames of the tabernacle, with its bars, pillars, and bases, ³² and the pillars of the court round about with their bases, pegs, and cords, with all their equipment and all their accessories; and you shall assign by name the objects which they are required to carry. ³³ This is the service of the families of the sons of Merar'i, the whole of their service in the tent of meeting, under the hand of Ith'amar the son of Aaron the priest."

³⁴ And Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the congregation numbered the sons of the Ko'hathites, by their families and their fathers' houses, ³⁵ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, every one that could enter the service, for work in the tent of meeting; ³⁶ and their number by families was two thousand seven hundred and fifty. ³⁷ This was the number of the families of the Ko'hathites, all who served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD by Moses.

³⁸ The number of the sons of Gershon, by their families and their fathers' houses, ³⁹ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, every one that could enter the service for work in the tent of meeting— ⁴⁰ their number by their families and their fathers' houses was two thousand six hundred and thirty. ⁴¹ This was the number of the families of the sons of Gershon, all who served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD.

⁴² The number of the families of the sons of Merar'i, by their families and their fathers' houses, ⁴³ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, every one that could enter the service, for work in the tent of meeting— ⁴⁴ their number by families was three thousand two hundred. ⁴⁵ These are those who were numbered of the families of the sons of Merar'i, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD by Moses.

⁴⁶ All those who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel numbered, by their families and their fathers' houses, ⁴⁷ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, every one that could enter to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens in the tent of meeting, ⁴⁸ those who were numbered of them were eight thousand five hundred and eighty. ⁴⁹ According to the

holy objects, lest divine holiness destroy them (compare 1 Sam. ch. 5-6; 2 Sam. 6.6-11). **21-28:** For the responsibility of the Gershonites, see 3.25-26. **29-33:** 3.36-37. **48:** Compare the number of male Levites in 3.39.

commandment of the LORD through Moses they were appointed, each to his task of serving or carrying; thus they were numbered by him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

5 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one having a discharge, and every one that is unclean through contact with the dead; ³ you shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell." ⁴ And the people of Israel did so, and drove them outside the camp; as the LORD said to Moses, so the people of Israel did.

5 And the LORD said to Moses, ⁶ "Say to the people of Israel, When a man or woman commits any of the sins that men commit by breaking faith with the LORD, and that person is guilty, ⁷ he shall confess his sin which he has committed; and he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it, and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong. ⁸ But if the man has no kinsman to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for wrong shall go to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement with which atonement is made for him. ⁹ And every offering, all the holy things of the people of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his; ¹⁰ and every man's holy things shall be his; whatever any man gives to the priest shall be his."

11 And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² "Say to the people of Israel, If any man's wife goes astray and acts unfaithfully against him, ¹³ if a man lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from

the eyes of her husband, and she is undetected though she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her, since she was not taken in the act; ¹⁴ and if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he is jealous of his wife who has defiled herself; or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he is jealous of his wife, though she has not defiled herself; ¹⁵ then the man shall bring his wife to the priest, and bring the offering required of her, a tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it and put no frankincense on it, for it is a cereal offering of jealousy, a cereal offering of remembrance, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16 "And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD; ¹⁷ and the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. ¹⁸ And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and unbind the hair of the woman's head, and place in her hands the cereal offering of remembrance, which is the cereal offering of jealousy. And in his hand the priest shall have the water of bitterness that brings the curse. ¹⁹ Then the priest shall make her take an oath, saying, 'If no man has lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to uncleanness, while you were under your husband's authority, be free from this water of bitterness that brings the curse. ²⁰ But if you have gone astray, though you are under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself, and some man other than your husband has lain with you, ²¹ then' (let the priest make the woman take

5.1-6.21: Various instructions to the people. **1-4:** The sanctity of the tabernacle is the reason for excluding unclean people, such as lepers (Lev.13.46), those having a bodily discharge (Lev. ch. 15), or those defiled by contact with the dead (Lev.21.1-12). **5-10:** This case law, supplemental to Lev.6.1-7 (Ex.22.7-15), deals with a situation in which there is no *kinsman* (see Lev.25.25 n.). **11-31:** Another case law, dealing with a woman suspected of adultery. **13-14:** This old law deals with a case not covered elsewhere (e.g. Lev.20.10): no witness can testify *since she was not taken in the act*. **15:** The *cereal offering* (Lev. ch. 2) of *jealousy* is intended to bring the case directly to God. **16-28:** A trial by ordeal, a common practice among ancient peoples. **16:** *Before the LORD*, i.e. to the sanctuary (Ex.22.9). **19-22:** The oath of execra-

the oath of the curse, and say to the woman) 'the LORD make you an execration and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh fall away and your body swell; ²² may this water that brings the curse pass into your bowels and make your body swell and your thigh fall away.' And the woman shall say, 'Amen, Amen.'

²³ "Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and wash them off into the water of bitterness; ²⁴ and he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings the curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain. ²⁵ And the priest shall take the cereal offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the cereal offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar; ²⁶ and the priest shall take a handful of the cereal offering, as its memorial portion, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall make the woman drink the water. ²⁷ And when he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and has acted unfaithfully against her husband, the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain, and her body shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away, and the woman shall become an execration among her people. ²⁸ But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, then she shall be free and shall conceive children.

²⁹ "This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, though under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself, ³⁰ or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man and he is jealous of his wife; then he

shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. ³¹ The man shall be free from iniquity, but the woman shall bear her iniquity."

⁶ ² And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite,^b to separate himself to the LORD, ³ he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink, and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. ⁴ All the days of his separation^c he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.

⁵ "All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long.

⁶ "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. ⁷ Neither for his father nor for his mother, nor for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean; because his separation to God is upon his head. ⁸ All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.

⁹ "And if any man dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. ¹⁰ On the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest to the door of the tent of

^b That is one separated or one consecrated
^c Or Naziriteship

tion, compare Ex.22.10-11. **23-28:** The oath is followed by the drinking of the water of bitterness that brings the curse (v. 18). It was believed that if a person were guilty this potion would have effects which would signify the LORD's verdict of judgment (Ex.32.20,35). **26: Memorial portion,** see Lev.2.2-3 n. **6.1-21:** The vow of a Nazirite. **2:** A Nazirite is a holy person who has taken the vow to separate himself to the LORD (Jg.13.5; 1 Sam.1.11; Am.2.11-12). **3-5:** Abstinence from the fruit of the vine (Jer. ch. 35; compare Lk.1.15), as well as from vinegar made from soured intoxicants, dramatizes Israel's separation from Canaanite culture (see Gen.9.20-21 n.). For this restriction, as well as the law that no razor shall come upon his head, see the Samson story (especially Jg.13.4-5). **6-7:** Compare Lev.21.1-12. **9-12:** Accidental contact with a corpse defiles his consecrated head, i.e. the long locks which evidence his holy separation

meeting,¹¹ and the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead body. And he shall consecrate his head that same day,¹² and separate himself to the LORD for the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering; but the former time shall be void, because his separation was defiled.

13 "And this is the law for the Nazirite, when the time of his separation has been completed: he shall be brought to the door of the tent of meeting,¹⁴ and he shall offer his gift to the LORD, one male lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb a year old without blemish as a sin offering, and one ram without blemish as a peace offering,¹⁵ and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and their cereal offering and their drink offerings.¹⁶ And the priest shall present them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering,¹⁷ and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall offer also its cereal offering and its drink offering.¹⁸ And the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tent of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.¹⁹ And the priest shall take the shoulder of the ram, when it is boiled, and one unleavened

cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazirite, after he has shaven the hair of his consecration,²⁰ and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD; they are a holy portion for the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered; and after that the Nazirite may drink wine.

21 "This is the law for the Nazirite who takes a vow. His offering to the LORD shall be according to his vow as a Nazirite, apart from what else he can afford; in accordance with the vow which he takes, so shall he do according to the law for his separation as a Nazirite."

22 The LORD said to Moses,²³ "Say to Aaron and his sons, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴ The LORD bless you and keep you:

²⁵ The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:

²⁶ The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

27 "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."

7 On the day when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, and had anointed and consecrated it with all its furnishings, and had anointed and consecrated the altar with all its utensils,² the leaders of Israel, heads of their fathers' houses, the leaders of the tribes, who were over those who were numbered,³ offered and brought their offerings before the

(v. 7b), so that he must start the vow over again. **13-20:** The law for terminating the vow. **14-17:** For the kinds of sacrifice, see Lev. chs. 1-7. **18:** Hair offerings were not uncommon in ancient religion. **20:** *Wave offering*, see Ex.29.24 n. **22-27:** The Aaronic benediction. This blessing was undoubtedly used in the temple services at Jerusalem. **25:** *Make his face shine upon you*, signifies divine favor (Pss.31.16; 80.3,7,19), as does also the expression *lift up his countenance* (Pss.4.6; 44.3; 89.15). **26:** *Peace*, i.e. well-being, welfare, including peace with God in the covenant relationship. **27:** On the meaning of the *name*, see Gen.32.27 n.

7.1-89: Offerings from the tribal leaders for the service of the tabernacle and the dedication of the altar. **1:** The date suddenly shifts back to Ex.40.17 (compare Num.1.1), showing that a new block of tradition begins here. **2-9:** The leaders present wagons for transporting the tabernacle equipment, although the Kohathites, for the sake of precaution, had to carry the *holy things* on the shoulder (4.1-15).

LORD, six covered wagons and twelve oxen, a wagon for every two of the leaders, and for each one an ox; they offered them before the tabernacle.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, ⁵ "Accept these from them, that they may be used in doing the service of the tent of meeting, and give them to the Levites, to each man according to his service."

⁶ So Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites.

⁷ Two wagons and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; ⁸ and four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merar'i, according to their service, under the direction of Ith'amar the son of Aaron the priest. ⁹ But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because they were charged with the care of the holy things which had to be carried on the shoulder. ¹⁰ And the leaders offered offerings for the dedication of the altar on the day it was anointed; and the leaders offered their offering before the altar. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "They shall offer their offerings, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar."

¹² He who offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Ammin'adab, of the tribe of Judah; ¹³ and his offering was one silver plate whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ¹⁴ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ¹⁵ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ¹⁶ one male goat for a sin offering; ¹⁷ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Ammin'adab.

¹⁸ On the second day Nathana'el the son of Zu'ar, the leader of Is'sachar, made an offering; ¹⁹ he offered for his offering one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, accord-

ing to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ²⁰ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ²¹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ²² one male goat for a sin offering; ²³ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nathana'el the son of Zu'ar.

²⁴ On the third day Eli'ab the son of Helon, the leader of the men of Zebulun: ²⁵ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ²⁶ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ²⁷ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ²⁸ one male goat for a sin offering; ²⁹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eli'ab the son of Helon.

³⁰ On the fourth day Eli'zur the son of Shed'eur, the leader of the men of Reuben: ³¹ his offering was one silver plate whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ³² one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ³³ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ³⁴ one male goat for a sin offering; ³⁵ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eli'zur the son of Shed'eur.

³⁶ On the fifth day Shelu'mi-el the son of Zurishad'dai, the leader of the men of Simeon: ³⁷ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of

them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ³⁸ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ³⁹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁴⁰ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁴¹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Shelu'mi-el the son of Zurishad'dai.

42 On the sixth day Eli'asaph the son of Deu'el, the leader of the men of Gad: ⁴³ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ⁴⁴ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁴⁵ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁴⁶ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁴⁷ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eli'asaph the son of Deu'el.

48 On the seventh day Eli'shama the son of Ammi'hud, the leader of the men of E'phraim: ⁴⁹ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ⁵⁰ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁵¹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁵² one male goat for a sin offering; ⁵³ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eli'shama the son of Ammi'hud.

54 On the eighth day Gama'liel the son of Pedah'zur, the leader of the men of Manas'seh: ⁵⁵ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of

them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ⁵⁶ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁵⁷ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁵⁸ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁵⁹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Gama'liel the son of Pedah'zur.

60 On the ninth day Abi'dan the son of Gideo'ni, the leader of the men of Benjamin: ⁶¹ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ⁶² one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁶³ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁶⁴ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁶⁵ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Abi'dan the son of Gideo'ni.

66 On the tenth day Ahie'zer the son of Ammishad'dai, the leader of the men of Dan: ⁶⁷ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ⁶⁸ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁶⁹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁰ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁷¹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Ahie'zer the son of Ammishad'dai.

72 On the eleventh day Pa'giel the son of Ochran, the leader of the men of Asher: ⁷³ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel

of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ⁷⁴ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁷⁵ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁶ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁷⁷ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Pa'giel the son of Ochran.

⁷⁸ On the twelfth day Ahi'ra the son of Enan, the leader of the men of Naph'tali: ⁷⁹ his offering was one silver plate, whose weight was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver basin of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; ⁸⁰ one golden dish of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁸¹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁸² one male goat for a sin offering; ⁸³ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Ahi'ra the son of Enan.

⁸⁴ This was the dedication offering for the altar, on the day when it was anointed, from the leaders of Israel: twelve silver plates, twelve silver basins, twelve golden dishes, ⁸⁵ each silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and each basin seventy, all the silver of the vessels two thousand four hundred shekels according to the shekel of the sanctuary, ⁸⁶ the twelve golden dishes, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece according to the shekel of the sanctuary, all the gold of the dishes being a hundred and twenty shekels; ⁸⁷ all the cattle for the burnt offering twelve bulls, twelve

rams, twelve male lambs a year old, with their cereal offering; and twelve male goats for a sin offering; ⁸⁸ and all the cattle for the sacrifice of peace offerings twenty-four bulls, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, the male lambs a year old sixty. This was the dedication offering for the altar, after it was anointed.

⁸⁹ And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him.

8 Now the LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to Aaron, When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand." ³ And Aaron did so; he set up its lamps to give light in front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses. ⁴ And this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold; from its base to its flowers, it was hammered work; according to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, ⁶ "Take the Levites from among the people of Israel, and cleanse them. ⁷ And thus you shall do to them, to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of expiation upon them, and let them go with a razor over all their body, and wash their clothes and cleanse themselves. ⁸ Then let them take a young bull and its cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another young bull for a sin offering. ⁹ And you shall present the Levites before the tent of meeting, and assemble the whole congregation of the people of Israel. ¹⁰ When you present the

12-83: The tribal names are taken from the old list found in 1.5-15 (compare 10.14-27). The dedication offering presented on successive days was the same. **85:** *The shekel of the sanctuary*, see Ex.30.13 n. **89:** Ex.25.22.

8.1-26: The consecration of the Levites. **1-4:** Ex.25.37; 27.21; 30.8; Lev.24.2-4. The lighting of the lamps is the prerogative of the Aaronic priests. **4:** *The pattern*, see Ex.25.9. **5-22:** The Levites are to be consecrated for their office by a special purification ceremony (compare the ordination of the Aaronic priests, Lev. ch. 8). **7:** *The water of expiation* (compare Ezek.36.25) refers to ceremonial cleansing. Shaving the hair and washing garments were rites of purification.

Levites before the LORD, the people of Israel shall lay their hands upon the Levites, ¹¹ and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the people of Israel, that it may be theirs to do the service of the LORD. ¹² Then the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bulls; and you shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. ¹³ And you shall cause the Levites to attend Aaron and his sons, and shall offer them as a wave offering to the LORD.

14 "Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the people of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. ¹⁵ And after that the Levites shall go in to do service at the tent of meeting, when you have cleansed them and offered them as a wave offering. ¹⁶ For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel; instead of all that open the womb, the first-born of all the people of Israel, I have taken them for myself. ¹⁷ For all the first-born among the people of Israel are mine, both of man and of beast; on the day that I slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for myself, ¹⁸ and I have taken the Levites instead of all the first-born among the people of Israel. ¹⁹ And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel in case the people of Israel should come near the sanctuary."

20 Thus did Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the people of Israel to the Levites; according to all

that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, the people of Israel did to them. ²¹ And the Levites purified themselves from sin, and washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. ²² And after that the Levites went in to do their service in the tent of meeting in attendance upon Aaron and his sons; as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

23 And the LORD said to Moses, ²⁴ "This is what pertains to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall go in to perform the work in the service of the tent of meeting; ²⁵ and from the age of fifty years they shall withdraw from the work of the service and serve no more, ²⁶ but minister to their brethren in the tent of meeting, to keep the charge, and they shall do no service. Thus shall you do to the Levites in assigning their duties."

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ² "Let the people of Israel keep the passover at its appointed time. ³ On the fourteenth day of this month, in the evening, you shall keep it at its appointed time; according to all its statutes and all its ordinances you shall keep it." ⁴ So Moses told the people of Israel that they should keep the passover. ⁵ And they kept the passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the people of Israel did. ⁶ And there were certain men who were unclean through touching the dead body of a

10-11: By the laying on of hands (Lev.1.4) the people identify themselves with the Levites who are "sacrificed" instead of their first-born (vv. 16-17; 3.13). *Wave offering* is used symbolically to indicate that the Levites belong to Aaron and his sons just as the waved sacrifice belongs to the priests (see Ex.29.24 n.). 12: *Make atonement*, see Ex.29.35-37 n. 16-19: 3.5-13. The Levites, by their position in the camp (1.52-53; 3.38), shielded the people from the dreadful effects of holiness, which could cause a *plague* or other calamity (1 Sam. chs. 5-6). 24: 4.3.

9.1-10.10: Other events and instructions. 1-14: Supplement to the laws concerning the passover. 1: Here, as in 7.1, the month is that of Ex.40.17 rather than the date assumed for chs. 1-6.

man, so that they could not keep the passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron on that day; ⁷ and those men said to him, "We are unclean through touching the dead body of a man; why are we kept from offering the LORD's offering at its appointed time among the people of Israel?" ⁸ And Moses said to them, "Wait, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."

⁹ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁰ "Say to the people of Israel, If any man of you or of your descendants is unclean through touching a dead body, or is afar off on a journey, he shall still keep the passover to the LORD. ¹¹ In the second month on the fourteenth day in the evening they shall keep it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ¹² They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute for the passover they shall keep it. ¹³ But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, yet refrains from keeping the passover, that person shall be cut off from his people, because he did not offer the LORD's offering at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin. ¹⁴ And if a stranger sojourns among you, and will keep the passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the passover and according to its ordinance, so shall he do; you shall have one statute, both for the sojourner and for the native."

¹⁵ On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony; and at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning. ¹⁶ So it was continually; the cloud covered it by day,^d and the appearance of fire by night. ¹⁷ And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tent,

after that the people of Israel set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel encamped. ¹⁸ At the command of the LORD the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the LORD they encamped; as long as the cloud rested over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. ¹⁹ Even when the cloud continued over the tabernacle many days, the people of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and did not set out. ²⁰ Sometimes the cloud was a few days over the tabernacle, and according to the command of the LORD they remained in camp; then according to the command of the LORD they set out. ²¹ And sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning; and when the cloud was taken up in the morning, they set out, or if it continued for a day and a night, when the cloud was taken up they set out. ²² Whether it was two days, or a month, or a longer time, that the cloud continued over the tabernacle, abiding there, the people of Israel remained in camp and did not set out; but when it was taken up they set out. ²³ At the command of the LORD they encamped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by Moses.

10 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Make two silver trumpets; of hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation, and for breaking camp. ³ And when both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁴ But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the tribes of Israel, shall gather themselves

d Gk Syr Vg: Heb lacks by day

2-4: Ex.12.1-13,21-27. **6-7:** On uncleanness through touching a corpse, see Lev.21.1-2. **8:** This verse shows that Israel's law was not fixed and unchangeable, but developed as the people faced new situations (15.23). **9:** The case of one who is *afar off on a journey* apparently presupposes settlement in Canaan and goes beyond the case at hand (v. 7). **11:** In these cases, the passover may be kept one month late. **13:** *Cut off*, see Lev.7.20 n. **15-23:** On the fiery cloud, see Ex.14.24; 40.34-38 n. These verses (compare 14.14) presuppose Israel's march, rather than the sojourn at Sinai and thus anticipate 10.11-13. **15:** Ex.40.34-38. **10.1-10:** Sounding the trumpets.

to you. ⁵ When you blow an alarm, the camps that are on the east side shall set out. ⁶ And when you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are on the south side shall set out. An alarm is to be blown whenever they are to set out. ⁷ But when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. ⁸ And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets. The trumpets shall be to you for a perpetual statute throughout your generations. ⁹ And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies. ¹⁰ On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts, and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; they shall serve you for remembrance before your God: I am the LORD your God."

11 In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony, ¹² and the people of Israel set out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. ¹³ They set out for the first time at the command of the LORD by Moses. ¹⁴ The standard of the camp of the men of Judah set out first by their companies; and over their host was Nahshon the son of Ammin'adab. ¹⁵ And over the host of the tribe of the men of Is'sachar was Nethan'el the son of Zu'ar. ¹⁶ And over the host of the tribe of the men of

Zeb'ulun was Eli'ab the son of Helon.

17 And when the tabernacle was taken down, the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merar'i, who carried the tabernacle, set out. ¹⁸ And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out by their companies; and over their host was Eli'zur the son of Shed'eur. ¹⁹ And over the host of the tribe of the men of Simeon was Shelu'mi-el the son of Zurishad'dai. ²⁰ And over the host of the tribe of the men of Gad was Eli'asaph the son of Deu'el.

21 Then the Ko'hathites set out, carrying the holy things, and the tabernacle was set up before their arrival. ²² And the standard of the camp of the men of E'phraim set out by their companies; and over their host was Eli'shama the son of Ammi'hud. ²³ And over the host of the tribe of the men of Manas'seh was Gama'liel the son of Pedah'zur. ²⁴ And over the host of the tribe of the men of Benjamin was Abi'dan the son of Gideo'ni.

25 Then the standard of the camp of the men of Dan, acting as the rear guard of all the camps, set out by their companies; and over their host was Ahie'zer the son of Ammishad'dai. ²⁶ And over the host of the tribe of the men of Asher was Pa'giel the son of Ochran. ²⁷ And over the host of the tribe of the men of Naph'tali was Ahi'ra the son of Enan. ²⁸ This was the order of march of the people of Israel according to their hosts, when they set out.

29 And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reu'el the Mid'ianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you'; come with us, and we will do you good; for the LORD has

5-7: An *alarm* was a military call (v. 9; Am.3.6), as distinguished from the trumpet which proclaims assembly (Lev. ch. 23, especially v. 24). 10: *The beginnings of your months*, see 28.11-15 n.

10.11-36: *Israel on the march*. The people departed from Sinai with signs of the LORD's accompanying presence. 11: The date was eleven months after the arrival at Sinai (Ex.19.1) or nineteen days after the census (Num.1.1). 12: *By stages*, see ch. 33. 13-28: On the order of march and Levitical tasks, see chs. 2-3. 29-36: Here old literary traditions reappear after a long, unbroken sequence of priestly material (Ex. chs. 35-40; Lev.; Num.1.1-10.28). 29: *Hobab*, otherwise known as Jethro (Ex.2.18 n.), was leader of the Kenites, a Midianite clan who were

promised good to Israel.”³⁰ But he said to him, “I will not go; I will depart to my own land and to my kindred.”

³¹ And he said, “Do not leave us, I pray you, for you know how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us.”³² And if you go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same will we do to you.”

³³ So they set out from the mount of the LORD three days’ journey; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them three days’ journey, to seek out a resting place for them.

³⁴ And the cloud of the LORD was over them by day, whenever they set out from the camp.

³⁵ And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, “Arise, O LORD, and let thy enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.”³⁶ And when it rested, he said, “Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel.”

¶ And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes; and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some outlying parts of the camp.² Then the people cried to Moses; and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire abated.³ So the name of that place was called Tab’erah,^e because the fire of the LORD burned among them.

⁴ Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving; and the people of Israel also wept again, and said, “O that we had meat to eat!”⁵ We

remember the fish we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;⁶ but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”

⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium.⁸ The people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills or beat it in mortars, and boiled it in pots, and made cakes of it; and the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil.⁹ When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.

¹⁰ Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, every man at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased.¹¹ Moses said to the LORD, “Why hast thou dealt ill with thy servant? And why have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou dost lay the burden of all this people upon me?”

¹² Did I conceive all this people? Did I bring them forth, that thou shouldst say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries the sucking child, to the land which thou didst swear to give their fathers?’¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’¹⁴ I am not able to carry all this people alone, the burden is too heavy for me.¹⁵ If thou wilt deal thus with me, kill me at once, if I find favor in thy sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”

^e That is *Burning*

allies during Israel’s early history (Ex. ch. 18; Jg.1.16; 4.11; 5.24). **33–36:** Ancient tradition about the ark (see Ex.25.10–22 n.). **33:** This verse should not be interpreted to mean that the ark went ahead *three days’ journey*; rather, it *went before* them (compare v. 21) during this duration of journey from Sinai. **35–36:** The ancient “song to the ark” is based on the conviction that the ark was the LORD’s throne, upon which he was seated invisibly as holy war was waged against his enemies (Jos. chs. 3–4; 1 Sam.4.3–22; compare Ps.24.7–10).

11.1–35: Israel’s murmuring in the wilderness. **1:** See Ex.15.24 n. *The fire of the LORD* may refer to some natural phenomenon like lightning which was interpreted as God’s consuming holiness (compare Lev.10.2). **4–15:** Not satisfied with the manna, the people craved seasoned meat dishes such as they had enjoyed in Egypt (Ex.16.3). **4:** *Rabble*, see Ex.12.38 n. *Wept again*, see Ex.16.2–3. **7–9:** *The manna*, see Ex.16.14–21,31. *Bdellium*, a resinous gum. **11–15:** In this chapter two motifs have been woven together: one dealing with the miraculous provision of desert food, the other dealing with Moses’ heavy responsibilities as leader (vv. 11–12,14–17, 24–30). **11–12:** On Moses’ impatience, see Ex.17.2–4. **14:** *The burden is too heavy*, see Ex.18.17–

16 And the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ And I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take some of the spirit which is upon you and put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. ¹⁸ And say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. ¹⁹ You shall not eat one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, ²⁰ but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you, and have wept before him, saying, "Why did we come forth out of Egypt?"' " ²¹ But Moses said, "The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot; and thou hast said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!' ²² Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?" ²³ And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see

whether my word will come true for you or not."

24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and placed them round about the tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did so no more.

26 Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested upon them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the minister of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, forbid them." ²⁹ But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

31 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and it brought quails from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and about two cubits above the face of the earth.

18. 16-17 (also 24-25): Moses' burden of leadership was lightened by investing seventy elders with power to assist him (Ex.18.21-23). This account presupposes the old tradition about the *tent of meeting* (Ex.33.7-11). 17: Moses is regarded as a charismatic leader, endowed with the divine spirit (compare 24.2; Jg.11.29). The transfer of a portion of the spirit to the elders (2 Kg.2.9-10) indicates that the latter are subordinate to Moses, who stands in a close relation to God (Ex.33.11). 18-23: Continuation of the food tradition. 21: Ex.12.37. The story stresses the LORD's miraculous power to support an extremely large population in the wilderness. 25: *They prophesied*, because the divine spirit was put upon them. Such ecstatic prophecy, familiar in Israel's early prophetic movement (1 Sam.10.6,10-13; 1 Kg.22.6,10-12), probably shows Canaanite influence. 26-30: Two other elders received the gift of prophecy even though they stayed in the camp. 26: Here it is assumed that the tent of meeting was outside the camp (Ex.33.7; see Num.2.2 n.). *Registered*, i.e. enrolled as representatives of the community. 31-35: Continuation of vv. 18-23. 31-35: Like the manna, the quails (Ex.16.13) are a natural phenomenon of the desert. They migrate over the region in great numbers and, when exhausted, are easily caught. 31: *A wind from the LORD* (compare Ex.14.21) brought the quail from *the sea*, the Gulf of Aqabah. 33: A sickness which resulted from eating quail is interpreted as divine

³² And the people rose all that day, and all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails; he who gathered least gathered ten homers; and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ Therefore the name of that place was called Kib'roth-hatta'avah,^f because there they buried the people who had the craving. ³⁵ From Kib'roth-hatta'avah the people journeyed to Haze'roth; and they remained at Haze'roth.

12 Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman; ² and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. ³ Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth. ⁴ And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." And the three of them came out. ⁵ And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forward. ⁶ And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with my

servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. ⁸ With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

⁹ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed; ¹⁰ and when the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned towards Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. ¹¹ And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not^g punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. ¹² Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb." ¹³ And Moses cried to the LORD, "Heal her, O God, I beseech thee." ¹⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut up outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again." ¹⁵ So Miriam was shut up outside the camp seven days; and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again. ¹⁶ After that the people set out from Haze'roth, and encamped in the wilderness of Paran.

13 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers shall you send a man, every one a

*f That is Graves of craving
g Heb lay not sin upon us*

judgment upon the people's faithlessness. A *plague* was an act of God; see Lev.26.21; Dt. 28.11; 1 Sam.4.8.

12.1-16: The punishment of Miriam for challenging Moses' unique relation to God. **1:** Moses had married Zipporah, a Midianite (Ex.2.21). The term *Cushite* apparently includes Midianites and other Arabic peoples (Hab.3.7). **2:** The question is directed against Moses' position as covenant mediator and leader of the people (Ex.19.9; 33.11). Miriam was also recognized as a spiritual leader (Ex.15.20; Mic.6.4). **3:** *Meek*, i.e. humble before God (Ex.3.11). This verse is an age-old stumbling-block to the belief that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch. **4:** See 11.26 n. **6-8:** The LORD normally communicates with prophets indirectly through dreams or visions (see Dt.13.1 n.); but with Moses he speaks directly (see Ex.33.11 n.). The *form of the LORD*, compare Ex.33.17-23. **14:** See 5.2-3; Lev.13.1-8. The punishment cannot be less than the defilement of being spat upon by her father, the sign of a curse (Dt.25.9). **16:** The early traditions in 10.29-12.15 assume that Israel had not yet reached Paran (10.12).

13.1-33: The reconnaissance of the land. Twelve scouts brought back a majority report that formidable obstacles stood in the way of taking Canaan. **1-16:** Priestly tradition gives the

leader among them.” ³ So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel. ⁴ And these were their names: From the tribe of Reuben, Sham’mu-a the son of Zaccur; ⁵ from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; ⁶ from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephun’neh; ⁷ from the tribe of Is’sachar, Igal the son of Joseph; ⁸ from the tribe of E’phraim, Hoshe’a the son of Nun; ⁹ from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; ¹⁰ from the tribe of Zeb’ulun, Gad’diel the son of Sodi; ¹¹ from the tribe of Joseph (that is from the tribe of Manas’sseh), Gaddi the son of Susi; ¹² from the tribe of Dan, Am’miel the son of Gemal’li; ¹³ from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; ¹⁴ from the tribe of Naph’tali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; ¹⁵ from the tribe of Gad, Geu’el the son of Machi. ¹⁶ These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshe’a the son of Nun Joshua.

17 Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up into the Negeb yonder, and go up into the hill country, ¹⁸ and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, ¹⁹ and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, ²⁰ and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there is wood in it or not. Be of good courage, and bring some of

the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath. ²² They went up into the Negeb, and came to Hebron; and Ahi’mán, She’shai, and Talmái, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zo’an in Egypt.) ²³ And they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they brought also some pomegranates and figs. ²⁴ That place was called the Valley of Eshcol,^h because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down from there.

25 At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. ²⁶ And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ Yet the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amal’ekites dwell in the land of the Negeb; the Hittites, the Jeb’usites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

30 But Caleb quieted the people

^h That is *Cluster*

names of the spies. The leaders are not the same as those of 1.5–15. **8:** *Hoshea*, an alternate form of Joshua (v. 16). **21:** This priestly comment supposes that the spies surveyed the whole of Canaan from the area of Kadesh (see v. 26 n.) to Rehob (2 Sam.10.6) near Laish or Dan. *The entrance to Hamath*, see 34.1–12 n. **22:** The mixed population of Canaan included the tribes descended from Anak, regarded as an unusually tall people (vv. 32–33). An archaeological comment dates the history of Hebron in relation to the founding of Zoan or Tanis, rebuilt as the Hyksos capital about 1700 B.C. (see Ex.1.11 n.). **23:** *The Valley of Eshcol* was in the vicinity of Hebron, a famous grape-producing area. **26:** *Kadesh* (-barnea), an oasis on the border between the wilderness of Paran and the wilderness of Zin. The traditions found in 10.11–21.3 deal with this oasis (see Ex.17.7 n.), where Israel spent most of the forty year sojourn in the wilderness (see Introduction). **27:** *Milk and honey*, see Ex.3.8 n. **29:** *Amalekites*, see Ex.17.8 n. For the pre-Israelite inhabitants, see Ex.3.8. **33:** *Nephilim*, see Gen.6.4 n.

before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once, and occupy it; for we are well able to overcome it." ³¹ Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."

³² So they brought to the people of Israel an evil report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone, to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. ³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim); and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

14 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry; and the people wept that night. ² And all the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron; the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why does the LORD bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

⁴ And they said to one another, "Let us choose a captain, and go back to Egypt." ⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. ⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephun'neh, who were among those who had spied out the land, rent their clothes, ⁷ and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only, do not rebel against

the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them." ¹⁰ But all the congregation said to stone them with stones.

Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs which I have wrought among them? ¹² I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

¹³ But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for thou didst bring up this people in thy might from among them, ¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that thou, O LORD, art in the midst of this people; for thou, O LORD, art seen face to face, and thy cloud stands over them and thou goest before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if thou dost kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard thy fame will say, ¹⁶ 'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore to give to them, therefore he has slain them in the wilderness.' ¹⁷ And now, I pray thee, let the power of the LORD be great as thou hast promised, saying, ¹⁸ 'The LORD is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.' ¹⁹ Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray thee, according to the greatness

14.1-45: Decision to attack. The Israelites attempted a foolhardy attack on Canaan from the south and were repulsed. **1-4:** See Ex.16.3 n. **5-6:** According to priestly tradition, Joshua sided with Caleb in appraising the situation (compare 13.30). **10:** On the LORD's *glory*, see Ex.16.6-7 n. **11:** The *signs* (see Ex.3.11-12 n.) were ambiguous evidences, not proofs of God's presence. **12:** Ex.32.9-10. **13-19:** In his intercession, Moses again appeals to the LORD's honor and gracious ways (Ex.32.11-13). **15-16:** Other nations, owing to limitations of understanding, will conclude that the LORD does not have the power of deity (Dt.32.26-27). In the ancient world a god was judged by whether he had the power to act (1 Kg.18.20-40). **18:** A quotation from

of thy steadfast love, and according as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

20 Then the LORD said, "I have pardoned, according to your word; ²¹ but truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, ²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the proof these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice, ²³ shall see the land which I swore to give to their fathers; and none of those who despised me shall see it. ²⁴ But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. ²⁵ Now, since the Amal'ekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea."

26 And the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron, ²⁷ "How long shall this wicked congregation murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the people of Israel, which they murmur against me. ²⁸ Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: ²⁹ your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and of all your number, numbered from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me, ³⁰ not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephun'neh and Joshua the son of Nun. ³¹ But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. ³² But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness.

³³ And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day a year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.' ³⁵ I, the LORD, have spoken; surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die."

36 And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, and who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against him by bringing up an evil report against the land, ³⁷ the men who brought up an evil report of the land, died by plague before the LORD. ³⁸ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephun'neh remained alive, of those men who went to spy out the land.

39 And Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. ⁴⁰ And they rose early in the morning, and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "See, we are here, we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised; for we have sinned." ⁴¹ But Moses said, "Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, for that will not succeed? ⁴² Do not go up lest you be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. ⁴³ For there the Amal'ekites and the Canaanites are before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you." ⁴⁴ But they presumed to go up to the heights

an old liturgical summary (Ex.34.5-8). 20: On the LORD's repentance, see Ex.32.14 n. 22-23: Since divine mercy does not exclude divine judgment (v. 18b), the verdict is that none of the present rebellious generation will enter Canaan. 24: Caleb is excepted in view of 13.30. Joshua is not mentioned because the account of his siding with Caleb (vv. 5-6,26-38) comes from another tradition. 26-38: This priestly tradition interprets the forty years in the wilderness as a time of divine judgment. 29: *Twenty years*, the age for beginning military service (1.3). 39-45: These verses preserve the memory of an abortive attempt to penetrate Canaan from the south. 42: The failure is interpreted by the words *the LORD is not among you*, i.e. the ark did not go

of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD, nor Moses, departed out of the camp. ⁴⁵ Then the Amal'ekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that hill country came down, and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

15 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land you are to inhabit, which I give you, ³ and you offer to the LORD from the herd or from the flock an offering by fire or a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfil a vow or as a freewill offering or at your appointed feasts, to make a pleasing odor to the LORD, ⁴ then he who brings his offering shall offer to the LORD a cereal offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil; ⁵ and wine for the drink offering, a fourth of a hin, you shall prepare with the burnt offering, or for the sacrifice, for each lamb. ⁶ Or for a ram, you shall prepare for a cereal offering two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil; ⁷ and for the drink offering you shall offer a third of a hin of wine, a pleasing odor to the LORD. ⁸ And when you prepare a bull for a burnt offering, or for a sacrifice, to fulfil a vow, or for peace offerings to the LORD, ⁹ then one shall offer with the bull a cereal offering of three tenths of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with half a hin of oil, ¹⁰ and you shall offer for the drink offering half a hin of wine, as an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

¹¹ "Thus it shall be done for each bull or ram, or for each of the male lambs or the kids. ¹² According to the number that you prepare, so shall you do with every one according to their

number. ¹³ All who are native shall do these things in this way, in offering an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD. ¹⁴ And if a stranger is sojourning with you, or any one is among you throughout your generations, and he wishes to offer an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD, he shall do as you do. ¹⁵ For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the sojourner be before the LORD. ¹⁶ One law and one ordinance shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸ "Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land to which I bring you ¹⁹ and when you eat of the food of the land, you shall present an offering to the LORD. ²⁰ Of the first of your coarse meal you shall present a cake as an offering; as an offering from the threshing floor, so shall you present it. ²¹ Of the first of your coarse meal you shall give to the LORD an offering throughout your generations.

²² "But if you err, and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses, ²³ all that the LORD has commanded you by Moses, from the day that the LORD gave commandment, and onward throughout your generations, ²⁴ then if it was done unwittingly without the knowledge of the congregation, all the congregation shall offer one young bull for a burnt offering, a pleasing odor to the LORD, with its cereal offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male goat for a sin offering. ²⁵ And the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of

with them into battle (v. 44). **45:** The bitterness of this and other battles is the basis of the ancient vow against the Amalekites (Ex.17.8-16).

15.1-41: Cultic regulations. The narrative is interrupted to introduce priestly matters (chs. 15-19) and thereby to continue the main line of priestly tradition (see 10.29-36 n.). **1-16:** This law supplements the legislation of Leviticus by prescribing the cereal (Lev. ch. 2) and drink offerings that are to accompany a burnt offering (Lev. ch. 1) or peace offering (Lev. ch. 3). **3:** A pleasing odor, see Lev.1.9 n. **16:** See Ex.12.43-49 n. **17-21:** An offering of the first fruits (Lev.23.9-14). **22-31:** A supplement to Lev. ch. 4. **23:** Mosaic law includes the original commandments and supplementary laws, thus indicating the development of law as new situations

the people of Israel, and they shall be forgiven; because it was an error, and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their error. ²⁶ And all the congregation of the people of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who sojourns among them, because the whole population was involved in the error.

²⁷ "If one person sins unwittingly, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering. ²⁸ And the priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who commits an error, when he sins unwittingly, to make atonement for him; and he shall be forgiven. ²⁹ You shall have one law for him who does anything unwittingly, for him who is native among the people of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourns among them. ³⁰ But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. ³¹ Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him."

³² While the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the sabbath day. ³³ And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. ³⁴ They put him in custody, because it had not been made plain what should be done to him. ³⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone

him with stones outside the camp." ³⁶ And all the congregation brought him outside the camp, and stoned him to death with stones, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁷ The LORD said to Moses, ³⁸ "Speak to the people of Israel, and bid them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put upon the tassel of each corner a cord of blue; ³⁹ and it shall be to you a tassel to look upon and remember all the commandments of the LORD, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to go after wantonly. ⁴⁰ So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God. ⁴¹ I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God."

16 Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abi'ram the sons of Eli'ab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, ² took men; and they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men; ³ and they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them; why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" ⁴ When Moses heard it, he fell on his face; ⁵ and he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning

were faced (see 9.8 n.). **25:** *Make atonement*, see Lev.1.4 n. **30:** Sin with a high hand, in contrast to sin committed inadvertently or in ignorance (vv. 25,26,27), is that which is done deliberately or defiantly (Ps.19.12-13). For such sin there is no atonement in priestly legislation. *Cut off*, see Lev.7.20 n. **32-36:** The death penalty had already been prescribed for violating the sabbath (Ex.31.14-5; 35.2). The man was put in custody until, by divine oracle, it was determined whether his action actually came under the law (see Lev.24.12). **37-41:** The ancient custom of wearing tassels is reinterpreted as a reminder of God's law.

16.1-50: Revolts against Moses. These stories preserve the memory of struggles which threatened the community during the sojourn at Kadesh. **3-11:** The rebellion led by Korah, of Levitical descent (v. 1a; Ex.6.21). Supported by other Levites (vv. 7,8,10), he challenged the subordination of some Levites to the Aaronite order (3.5-10; 8.5-22) and sought full priestly status (vv. 9-10,30). **5:** A divine sign will determine who shall *come near* to the LORD, i.e. to

the LORD will show who is his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to him; him whom he will choose he will cause to come near to him. ⁶ Do this: take censers, Korah and all his company; ⁷ put fire in them and put incense upon them before the LORD tomorrow, and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!"

⁸ And Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: ⁹ is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; ¹⁰ and that he has brought you near him, and all your brethren the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also? ¹¹ Therefore it is against the LORD that you and all your company have gathered together; what is Aaron that you murmur against him?"

¹² And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abi'ram the sons of Eli'ab; and they said, "We will not come up. ¹³ Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us? ¹⁴ Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up."

¹⁵ And Moses was very angry, and said to the LORD, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one ass from them, and I have not harmed one of them." ¹⁶ And Moses said to Korah, "Be present, you and all your company, before the LORD, you and they, and Aaron, tomorrow; ¹⁷ and let

every one of you take his censer, and put incense upon it, and every one of you bring before the LORD his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; you also, and Aaron, each his censer." ¹⁸ So every man took his censer, and they put fire in them and laid incense upon them, and they stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. ¹⁹ Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

²⁰ And the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron, ²¹ "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." ²² And they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be angry with all the congregation?" ²³ And the LORD said to Moses, ²⁴ "Say to the congregation, Get away from about the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abi'ram."

²⁵ Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abi'ram; and the elders of Israel followed him. ²⁶ And he said to the congregation, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins." ²⁷ So they got away from about the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abi'ram; and Dathan and Abi'ram came out and stood at the door of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones. ²⁸ And Moses said, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. ²⁹ If these men die the common death of all men, or if they are visited by the fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. ³⁰ But if the LORD creates something

the altar. **6-7:** Compare Lev.10.1-3. **12-15:** According to an older literary tradition, a civil revolt was led by laymen of the tribe of Reuben who were dissatisfied with Moses' leadership (vv. 1b-2). **13:** Here Egypt, in contrast to the wilderness, is a *land flowing with milk and honey* (see Ex.3.8 n.). **14:** *Put out the eyes*, i.e. blind with deceit. **16-24:** Continuation of the Korah story (vv. 3-11). **19:** Apparently the Levites' revolt had popular support. **24:** An editorial revision which combines the two revolts. **25-34:** A continuation of the story of the lay revolt (vv. 12-15). **27a:** See v. 24 n. **30:** *Sheol*, see Gen.37.35 n. **31-33:** These verses express the ancient

new, and the ground opens its mouth, and swallows them up, with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD."

31 And as he finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split asunder; ³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men that belonged to Korah and all their goods. ³³ So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. ³⁴ And all Israel that were round about them fled at their cry; for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up!" ³⁵ And fire came forth from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men offering the incense.

36ⁱ Then the LORD said to Moses, ³⁷ "Tell Elea'zar the son of Aaron the priest to take up the censers out of the blaze; then scatter the fire far and wide. For they are holy, ³⁸ the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives; so let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar, for they offered them before the LORD; therefore they are holy. Thus they shall be a sign to the people of Israel." ³⁹ So Elea'zar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned had offered; and they were hammered out as a covering for the altar, ⁴⁰ to be a reminder to the people of Israel, so that no one who is not a priest, who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should draw near to burn incense before the LORD, lest he become as Korah and as his company—as the LORD said to Elea'zar through Moses.

41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." ⁴² And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting; and behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. ⁴³ And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, ⁴⁴ and the LORD said to Moses, ⁴⁵ "Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. ⁴⁶ And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly to the congregation, and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone forth from the LORD, the plague has begun." ⁴⁷ So Aaron took it as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and behold, the plague had already begun among the people; and he put on the incense, and made atonement for the people. ⁴⁸ And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stopped. ⁴⁹ Now those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the affair of Korah. ⁵⁰ And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

17ⁱ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them rods, one for each fathers' house, from all their leaders according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods. Write each man's name upon his rod, ³ and write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi. For there shall be

i Ch 17.1 in Heb j Ch 17.16 in Heb

conception of corporate guilt which involves a man's whole family (Jos.7.22-26). **32:** *All the men that belonged to Korah*, see v. 24 n. **35-40:** Continuation of the Korah story (vv. 16-24). **35:** The two hundred and fifty men were Levites, sons of Korah (vv. 2b,17). **37-38:** On the bronze covering for the altar, see Ex.27.2. **40:** This verse states the purpose of the Korah story: to uphold the prerogatives of the Aaronite priesthood. **43:** *Cloud . . . glory*, see Ex.40.34-38 n.

17.1-13: Aaron's budding rod demonstrates the special status of the tribe of Levi, of whom he is the leader. **2:** *Fathers' house*, here means "tribe" (see 1.2-4 n.). The rod or staff was a symbol of tribal authority. **3:** On Aaron's Levitical descent, see Ex.6.14-25. **4:** *The testimony*,

one rod for the head of each fathers' house. ⁴ Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. ⁵ And the rod of the man whom I choose shall sprout; thus I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the people of Israel, which they murmur against you."

⁶ Moses spoke to the people of Israel; and all their leaders gave him rods, one for each leader, according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. ⁷ And Moses deposited the rods before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

⁸ And on the morrow Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds, and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds. ⁹ Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the people of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod. ¹⁰ And the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their murmurings against me, lest they die." ¹¹ Thus did Moses; as the LORD commanded him, so he did.

¹² And the people of Israel said to Moses, "Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. ¹³ Every one who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die. Are we all to perish?"

18 So the LORD said to Aaron, "You and your sons and your fathers' house with you shall bear iniquity in connection with the sanctuary; and you and your sons with you shall bear iniquity in connection with your priesthood. ² And with you bring your

brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may join you, and minister to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony. ³ They shall attend you and attend to all duties of the tent; but shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary or to the altar, lest they, and you, die. ⁴ They shall join you, and attend to the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; and no one else shall come near you. ⁵ And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, that there be wrath no more upon the people of Israel. ⁶ And behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the people of Israel; they are a gift to you, given to the LORD, to do the service of the tent of meeting. ⁷ And you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift,^k and any one else who comes near shall be put to death."

⁸ Then the LORD said to Aaron, "And behold, I have given you whatever is kept of the offerings made to me, all the consecrated things of the people of Israel; I have given them to you as a portion, and to your sons as a perpetual due. ⁹ This shall be yours of the most holy things, reserved from the fire; every offering of theirs, every cereal offering of theirs and every sin offering of theirs and every guilt offering of theirs, which they render to me, shall be most holy to you and to your sons. ¹⁰ In a most holy place shall you eat of it; every male may eat of it; it is holy to you. ¹¹ This also is yours, the offering of their gift, all the wave of-

^k Heb service of gift

see Ex.16.33-34 n. **5**: The people's murmurings, related in 16.41-50. **8**: Folk traditions of other peoples contain stories of blossoming rods, clubs, or spears. The sign signifies the LORD's choice of Aaron (v. 5) as leader of the whole priestly tribe of Levi. **10**: See Ex.25.16 n.

18.1-32: The responsibility of Aaronic priests and other Levites. This chapter comes naturally after the preceding one and gives the answer to the people's question in 17.13. **1**: *Bear iniquity*, i.e. bear the consequences for any cultic impropriety (Ex.28.38). All Levites are responsible for the sanctuary; only Aaron's sons are responsible for the priesthood (v. 7), because they minister at the altar and guard the purity of the sanctuary. **2-6**: Other Levites are assistants to the Aaronic order (3.5-10; 8.5-22). **7**: *Within the veil*, or in the Holy of Holies. **8-20**: Since the

ferings of the people of Israel; I have given them to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due; every one who is clean in your house may eat of it. ¹² All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the first fruits of what they give to the LORD, I give to you. ¹³ The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours; every one who is clean in your house may eat of it. ¹⁴ Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. ¹⁵ Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless the first-born of man you shall redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts you shall redeem. ¹⁶ And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. ¹⁷ But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shall burn their fat as an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD; ¹⁸ but their flesh shall be yours, as the breast that is waved and as the right thigh are yours. ¹⁹ All the holy offerings which the people of Israel present to the LORD I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due; it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD for you and for your offspring with you." ²⁰ And the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.

21 "To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting. ²² And henceforth the people of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. ²³ But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; and among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance. ²⁴ For the tithe of the people of Israel, which they present as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel."

25 And the LORD said to Moses, ²⁶ "Moreover you shall say to the Levites, 'When you take from the people of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe. ²⁷ And your offering shall be reckoned to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fulness of the wine press. ²⁸ So shall you also present an offering to the LORD from all your tithes, which you receive from the people of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD's offering to Aaron the priest. ²⁹ Out of all the gifts to you, you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, giving the hallowed part from them.' ³⁰ Therefore you shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce of the wine press; ³¹ and you may eat it in any place, you and your households;

tribe of Levi has no land inheritance, the Aaronic priests are to be supported from the offerings (v. 20; see Lev.2.2-3 n.). **9-10:** A definition of the *most holy things* which belong only to the Aaronic priests. For the types of sacrifice, see Lev. chs. 1-7. **11-19:** The priest and his family may eat the *holy things*, i.e. the *wave offerings* (e.g. of peace offerings, Lev.7.28-36), offerings of the *first fruits* (Num.15.17-21), or every *devoted thing*, such as the first-born of clean animals (Lev.27.26-28). **14-18:** Ex.13.12-14; 34.19-20. **19:** A *covenant of salt*, see Lev. 2.13 n. **21-24:** The rest of the Levites receive all tithes as their due (Lev.27.30-33). **25-32:** The assistant Levites are to pay a *tithe of the tithe* to the Aaronic priests.

for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting. ³² And you shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have offered the best of it. And you shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, lest you die.”

19 Now the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron, ² “This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded: Tell the people of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish, and upon which a yoke has never come. ³ And you shall give her to Elea’zar the priest, and she shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered before him; ⁴ and Elea’zar the priest shall take some of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of her blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. ⁵ And the heifer shall be burned in his sight; her skin, her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall be burned; ⁶ and the priest shall take cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet stuff, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer. ⁷ Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterwards he shall come into the camp; and the priest shall be unclean until evening. ⁸ He who burns the heifer shall wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening. ⁹ And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the people of Israel for the water for impurity, for the removal of sin. ¹⁰ And he who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. And this shall be to the people of Israel, and to the stranger who

sojourns among them, a perpetual statute.

11 “He who touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean seven days; ¹² he shall cleanse himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and so be clean; but if he does not cleanse himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not become clean. ¹³ Whoever touches a dead person, the body of any man who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from Israel; because the water for impurity was not thrown upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.

14 “This is the law when a man dies in a tent: every one who comes into the tent, and every one who is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. ¹⁵ And every open vessel, which has no cover fastened upon it, is unclean. ¹⁶ Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain with a sword, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. ¹⁷ For the unclean they shall take some ashes of the burnt sin offering, and running water shall be added in a vessel; ¹⁸ then a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the furnishings, and upon the persons who were there, and upon him who touched the bone, or the slain, or the dead, or the grave; ¹⁹ and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; thus on the seventh day he shall cleanse him, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and at evening he shall be clean.

20 “But the man who is unclean and

19.1-22: Rites for purifying a person who is defiled by a corpse. **1-10:** The purpose of this ancient rite is to prepare ceremonially the ashes used in the *water for impurity* (vv. 9,12-13). **4:** The sacred number, the sacred blood, and the sacred tent of meeting combine to make the rite efficacious. **6:** Compare Lev.14.4. **11-22:** The ceremonial cleansing. **11:** On defilement by the dead, see Lev.21.1-12. **12:** *The water*, referred to in v. 9. **13:** The defilement was not only dangerous to the individual but to the community, owing to the holiness of the tabernacle. **14-16:** Uncleanness, like the stench of death, could contaminate a tent or even enter an open vessel. **17:** *Some ashes*, see v. 9. *Hyssop*, see Ex.12.22 n.

does not cleanse himself, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, since he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD; because the water for impurity has not been thrown upon him, he is unclean. ²¹ And it shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening. ²² And whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and any one who touches it shall be unclean until evening."

20 And the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

2 Now there was no water for the congregation; and they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. ³ And the people contended with Moses, and said, "Would that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! ⁴ Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? ⁵ And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; and there is no water to drink." ⁶ Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tent of meeting, and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, ⁷ and the LORD said to Moses, ⁸ "Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the

rock before their eyes to yield its water; so you shall bring water out of the rock for them; so you shall give drink to the congregation and their cattle." ⁹ And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" ¹¹ And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his rod twice; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle. ¹² And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." ¹³ These are the waters of Mer'ibah,¹ where the people of Israel contended with the LORD, and he showed himself holy among them.

14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, "Thus says your brother Israel: You know all the adversity that has befallen us: ¹⁵ how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our fathers; ¹⁶ and when we cried to the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel and brought us forth out of Egypt; and here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. ¹⁷ Now let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, neither will we drink water from a well; we will go along the King's Highway, we will not turn aside to the right

¹ That is Contention

20.1-29: Departure from Kadesh. Having failed to enter Canaan from the south (chs. 13-14), Israel planned to detour through Transjordan in order to attack Canaan from the east. **1:** A summary which condenses Israel's long sojourn at Kadesh (see 13.26 n.). The year of the *first month* has dropped out. The whole generation, condemned to wander in the wilderness for about forty years (14.20-35), passed away. **2-13:** The Meribah incident is paralleled in Ex.17.1-7. **3:** *Our brethren*, i.e. Dathan and Abiram (ch. 15). **12:** Although the preceding narrative is silent about Moses' disbelief, it is implied that he failed to interpret the giving of water as a sign from the LORD (Dt.32.50-52). **13:** See Ex.17.7 n. **14-21:** The request for passage through Edom. **14:** *Your brother*, Gen.25.24-26. By the thirteenth century B.C. Edom, one of the "Hebrew" groups (see Gen.10.21-31 n.), had developed a non-hereditary monarchy (Gen.36.31-39). **16:** *Angel*, see Ex.23.20-21 n. **17:** *The King's Highway* was the main Transjordanian route from

hand or to the left, until we have passed through your territory.”¹⁸ But Edom said to him, “You shall not pass through, lest I come out with the sword against you.”¹⁹ And the people of Israel said to him, “We will go up by the highway; and if we drink of your water, I and my cattle, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing more.”²⁰ But he said, “You shall not pass through.” And Edom came out against them with many men, and with a strong force.²¹ Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

22 And they journeyed from Kadesh, and the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor.²³ And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom,²⁴ “Aaron shall be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the people of Israel, because you rebelled against my command at the waters of Mer’ibah.”²⁵ Take Aaron and Elea’zar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor;²⁶ and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Elea’zar his son; and Aaron shall be gathered to his people, and shall die there.”²⁷ Moses did as the LORD commanded; and they went up Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.²⁸ And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Elea’zar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Elea’zar came down from the mountain.²⁹ And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the

house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

21 When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive.² And Israel vowed a vow to the LORD, and said, “If thou wilt indeed give this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.”³ And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and gave over the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities; so the name of the place was called Hormah.^m

4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way.⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.”⁶ Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.⁷ And the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.”⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

m Heb Destruction

Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Aqabah to Syria. 22-29: The death of Aaron. 24: See 19.12 n. *Gathered to his people*, Gen.25.8. 26: *Garments*, i.e. of the high priest (Ex. ch. 28; Lev.8.7-9).

21.1-35: Events along the way. 1-3: Another account of the battle of Hormah (14.39-45; compare Jg.1.16-17). 1: *The way of Atharim*, probably the name of a pass. 2-3: A vow to wage holy war (see Ex.17.14 n.). This is apparently another tradition of an attempt to penetrate Canaan from the south; note that the people marched north from Kadesh. 4-9: The serpent scourge. 4: Leaving Mount Hor (20.27), the people turned south toward the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqabah), i.e. toward Ezion-geber (33.35; Dt.2.1-8). 5: See Ex.16.2-3 n. 6: An attack by *fiery serpents* or poisonous snakes was interpreted as divine judgment upon the people's rebellion. 8-9: These verses echo serpent magic, as practiced, e.g. in ancient Egypt. The *bronze serpent* (Nehushtan) was an object of popular worship during the Israelite monarchy (2 Kg.18.4).

10 And the people of Israel set out, and encamped in Oboth. ¹¹ And they set out from Oboth, and encamped at I'ye-ab'arim, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, toward the sunrise.

¹² From there they set out, and encamped in the Valley of Zered.

¹³ From there they set out, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness, that extends from the boundary of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the boundary of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

¹⁴ Wherefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD,

"Waheb in Suphah,
and the valleys of the Arnon,
¹⁵ and the slope of the valleys
that extends to the seat of Ar,
and leans to the border of Moab."

16 And from there they continued to Beer," that is the well of which the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." ¹⁷ Then Israel sang this song:

"Spring up, O well!—Sing to it!—
¹⁸ the well which the princes dug,
which the nobles of the people
dug,
with the scepter and with their
staves."

And from the wilderness they went on to Mat'tanah, ¹⁹ and from Mat'tanah to Nahal'iel, and from Nahal'iel to Bamoth, ²⁰ and from Bamoth to the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah which looks down upon the desert.^o

21 Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, ²² "Let me pass through your land; we will not turn aside into field or vineyard; we will not drink the water of a well; we will go by the King's Highway, until we have passed through

your territory." ²³ But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. He gathered all his men together, and went out against Israel to the wilderness, and came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. ²⁴ And Israel slew him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as to the Ammonites; for Jazer was the boundary of the Ammonites.^p ²⁵ And Israel took all these cities, and Israel settled in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its villages.

²⁶ For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon. ²⁷ Therefore the ballad singers say,

"Come to Heshbon, let it be built,
let the city of Sihon be
established.

²⁸ For fire went forth from Heshbon,
flame from the city of Sihon.

It devoured Ar of Moab,
the lords of the heights of the
Arnon.

²⁹ Woe to you, O Moab!
You are undone, O people of
Chemosh!

He has made his sons fugitives,
and his daughters captives,
to an Amorite king, Sihon.

³⁰ So their posterity perished from
Heshbon,^q as far as Dibon,
and we laid waste until fire
spread to Med'eba."^r

31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. ³² And Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took its villages,

ⁿ That is *Well* ^o Or *Jeshimon*

^p Gk: Heb the boundary of the Ammonites was strong

^q Gk: Heb we have shot at them. Heshbon has perished

^r Compare Sam and Gk: Heb we have laid waste to Nophah which to Medeba

10-20: The itinerary of the march (see ch. 33; Dt. ch. 2). 14-15: A quotation from an ancient poetic collection, *the Book of the Wars of the LORD* (compare Jos.10.13; 2 Sam.1.18). Ar, a chief city of Moab (v. 28). 16-18: The "Song of the Well," another ancient poetic fragment, is quoted here because water was miraculously provided along the way. 21-32: The defeat of the petty kingdom of the Amorites just north of Moab. 22: The request (compare 20.14-21) was made at the boundary river, Arnon (v. 13). 27: An ancient taunt song, quoted to show that Sihon had captured former Moabite territory, including the city of Heshbon. 29: *Chemosh*, god of the Moabites. 33-35: *Bashan*, a petty kingdom north of the Jabbok river. Og, Dt.3.1-2.

and dispossessed the Amorites that were there. ³³ Then they turned and went up by the way to Bashan; and Og the king of Bashan came out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Ed're-i. ³⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him; for I have given him into your hand, and all his people, and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon." ³⁵ So they slew him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was not one survivor left to him; and they possessed his land.

22 Then the people of Israel set out, and encamped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. ² And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. ³ And Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were many; Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel. ⁴ And Moab said to the elders of Mid'ian, "This horde will now lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." So Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, ⁵ sent messengers to Balaam the son of Be'or at Pethor, which is near the River, in the land of Amaw to call him, saying, "Behold, a people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me. ⁶ Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land; for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

⁷ So the elders of Moab and the elders of Mid'ian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam, and gave

him Balak's message. ⁸ And he said to them, "Lodge here this night, and I will bring back word to you, as the Lord speaks to me"; so the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. ⁹ And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" ¹⁰ And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, ¹¹ 'Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth; now come, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.' " ¹² God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." ¹³ So Balaam rose in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your own land; for the LORD has refused to let me go with you." ¹⁴ So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

¹⁵ Once again Balak sent princes, more in number and more honorable than they. ¹⁶ And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Let nothing hinder you from coming to me; ¹⁷ for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do; come, curse this people for me.' " ¹⁸ But Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the LORD my God, to do less or more. ¹⁹ Pray, now, tarry here this night also, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me." ²⁰ And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only what I bid you, that shall you do."

²¹ So Balaam rose in the morning,

22.1-40: Balak and Balaam. Fearful of the triumphant Israelites, the Moabite king invited a Mesopotamian diviner to put a curse on the invaders. **4:** On Moab's league with Midian, see ch. 31. **5-20:** Balak's two missions to obtain the services of Balaam who was in *Pethor*, located south of Carchemish near the River (Euphrates). In antiquity Babylonia was famed for the art of divination. **6:** On the power of the curse, see Gen.27.4 n. **8:** Throughout chs. 22-24 the conviction is expressed that a foreign priest-diviner, though not a member of the covenant community, was obedient to the LORD's will and that nothing could prevent the fulfilment of the divine purpose for Israel. **13:** It is implied that the LORD spoke to him in a dream (vv.

and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. ²² But God's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was riding on the ass, and his two servants were with him. ²³ And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the road, and went into the field; and Balaam struck the ass, to turn her into the road. ²⁴ Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. ²⁵ And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she pushed against the wall, and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. ²⁶ Then the angel of the LORD went ahead, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. ²⁷ When the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the ass with his staff. ²⁸ Then the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" ²⁹ And Balaam said to the ass, "Because you have made sport of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you." ³⁰ And the ass said to Balaam, "Am I not your ass, upon which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Was I ever accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No."

³¹ Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed his head, and fell on his face. ³² And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your ass these

three times? Behold, I have come forth to withstand you, because your way is perverse before me; ³³ and the ass saw me, and turned aside before me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely just now I would have slain you and let her live." ³⁴ Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that thou didst stand in the road against me. Now therefore, if it is evil in thy sight, I will go back again." ³⁵ And the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men; but only the word which I bid you, that shall you speak." So Balaam went on with the princes of Balak.

³⁶ When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, on the boundary formed by the Arnon, at the extremity of the boundary. ³⁷ And Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?" ³⁸ Balaam said to Balak, "Lo, I have come to you! Have I now any power at all to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak." ³⁹ Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kir'iaath-hu'zoth. ⁴⁰ And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam and to the princes who were with him.

⁴¹ And on the morrow Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-ba'al; and from there he saw the nearest of the people. ¹ And **23** Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me here seven altars, and provide for me here seven bulls and seven rams." ² Balak did as Balaam had said; and Balak and Balaam offered on each altar a bull and a ram. ³ And Balaam said to Balak, "Stand beside your burnt offering, and I will

8,19-20). **21-35:** The folk-story of Balaam's ass, which reflects oriental humor, is apparently another tradition. **22:** Note the contrast between this verse and the previous permission for Balaam to go (vv. 15-20). *The angel of the LORD*, see Gen.16.7 n. **23:** Jos.5.13. **34-35:** The incident serves to remind Balaam that he must speak only what the LORD bids him (compare 1 Kg.22.14), regardless of gifts or honors (v. 38).

22.41-24.25: The four oracles of Balaam, probably dating from the time of the early Israelite monarchy (24.17-19). **23.1-6:** Ancient Babylonian diviners resorted to this kind of sacrificial

go; perhaps the LORD will come to meet me; and whatever he shows me I will tell you." And he went to a bare height. ⁴ And God met Balaam; and Balaam said to him, "I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered upon each altar a bull and a ram." ⁵ And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." ⁶ And he returned to him, and lo, he and all the princes of Moab were standing beside his burnt offering. ⁷ And Balaam took up his discourse, and said,

"From Aram Balak has brought me,
the king of Moab from the eastern
mountains:

'Come, curse Jacob for me,
and come, denounce Israel!'

⁸ How can I curse whom God has not
cursed?

How can I denounce whom the
LORD has not denounced?

⁹ For from the top of the mountains
I see him,

from the hills I behold him;

lo, a people dwelling alone,
and not reckoning itself among the
nations!

¹⁰ Who can count the dust of Jacob,
or number the fourth part^s of
Israel?

Let me die the death of the
righteous,
and let my end be like his!"

¹¹ And Balak said to Balaam,
"What have you done to me? I took
you to curse my enemies, and behold,
you have done nothing but bless them."

¹² And he answered, "Must I not take
heed to speak what the LORD puts in
my mouth?"

¹³ And Balak said to him, "Come
with me to another place, from which

you may see them; you shall see only
the nearest of them, and shall not see
them all; then curse them for me from
there." ¹⁴ And he took him to the
field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah,
and built seven altars, and offered a
bull and a ram on each altar. ¹⁵ Balaam said to Balak, "Stand here beside
your burnt offering, while I meet the
LORD yonder." ¹⁶ And the LORD met
Balaam, and put a word in his mouth,
and said, "Return to Balak, and thus
shall you speak." ¹⁷ And he came to
him, and, lo, he was standing beside
his burnt offering, and the princes of
Moab with him. And Balak said to him,
"What has the LORD spoken?" ¹⁸ And
Balaam took up his discourse, and
said,

"Rise, Balak, and hear;

hearken to me, O son of Zippor:

¹⁹ God is not man, that he should lie,
or a son of man, that he should
repent.

Has he said, and will he not do it?

Or has he spoken, and will he not
fulfil it?

²⁰ Behold, I received a command to
bless:

he has blessed, and I cannot
revoke it.

²¹ He has not beheld misfortune in
Jacob;

nor has he seen trouble in Israel.

The LORD their God is with them,
and the shout of a king is among
them.

²² God brings them out of Egypt;
they have as it were the horns of
the wild ox.

²³ For there is no enchantment against
Jacob,

no divination against Israel;

^s Or dust clouds

ceremony to obtain an omen. 7-10: The first oracle. 7: *Aram*, i.e. "Aram of the Two Rivers" or Mesopotamia (Gen.24.10). 9: Israel is not a nation like other nations (compare 1 Sam.8.4-22) but a people set apart for a special destiny. 10: Balaam prays that, by not cursing God's people, he may come to the end of his days as a righteous man. 11-12: See 22.20. The narrative is written with a touch of humor. 13: Not wishing to defy God, Balak supposes that the oracle may be different if Balaam views the people from another perspective. *Pisgah*, see Dt.34.1 n. 18-24: The second oracle. 19: God's purpose is consistent; he is not characterized by human deceit and caprice (for another meaning of *repent*, see Ex.32.14 n.). *Son of man*, i.e. a human being (Ps.8.4). 21: *The shout*, Israel's acclamation of the LORD as King. 22: *The horns of the*

now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel,
 "What has God wrought!"
²⁴ Behold, a people! As a lioness it rises up
 and as a lion it lifts itself;
 it does not lie down till it devours the prey,
 and drinks the blood of the slain."

²⁵ And Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all."²⁶ But Balaam answered Balak, "Did I not tell you, 'All that the LORD says, that I must do?'"²⁷ And Balak said to Balaam, "Come now, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there."²⁸ So Balak took Balaam to the top of Pe'or, that overlooks the desert.²⁹ And Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me here seven altars, and provide for me here seven bulls and seven rams."³⁰ And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

24 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness.² And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and saw Israel encamping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him,³ and he took up his discourse, and said,

"The oracle of Balaam the son of Be'or,

the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,"

⁴ the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
 who sees the vision of the Almighty,
 falling down, but having his eyes uncovered:

⁵ how fair are your tents, O Jacob,

your encampments, O Israel!

⁶ Like valleys that stretch afar,
 like gardens beside a river,
 like aloes that the LORD has planted,
 like cedar trees beside the waters.

⁷ Water shall flow from his buckets,
 and his seed shall be in many waters,

his king shall be higher than Agag,
 and his kingdom shall be exalted.

⁸ God brings him out of Egypt;
 he has as it were the horns of the wild ox,

he shall eat up the nations his adversaries,
 and shall break their bones in pieces,
 and pierce them through with his arrows.

⁹ He couched, he lay down like a lion,
 and like a lioness; who will rouse him up?

Blessed be every one who blesses you,
 and cursed be every one who curses you."

¹⁰ And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them these three times."¹¹ Therefore now flee to your place; I said, 'I will certainly honor you,' but the LORD has held you back from honor."¹² And Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me,
¹³ 'If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will; what the LORD speaks, that will I speak?'"¹⁴ And now, behold, I am going to my people; come, I will

¹ Or *Jeshimon* ^u Or *closed or perfect*

wild ox, a symbol of brute strength. ²³: Since Israel's God cannot be coerced by magical techniques, divination is ineffective in altering Israel's destiny. ²⁸: *Peor*, a cultic center in Moab (25.3). ^{24.1}: Balaam begins to abandon his technique of divination. ³⁻⁴: These verses suggest the ecstasy during which the oracle came. ⁷: Secure and prosperous, Israel's seed shall be in many waters (an allusion to the subterranean ocean; see Gen.49.25 n.). *His king shall be higher than Agag*, a traditional name for the king of Amalek (1 Sam.15.8). ^{9b}: Gen.12.3. ¹⁰: Striking the hands together was a gesture of anger and reproach (Job 27.23). ¹⁴: Balaam not only defies Balak's command to get out but gives his last oracle without the preparatory rites of divination

let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days.”

¹⁵ And he took up his discourse, and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Be’or,
the oracle of the man whose eye
is opened,”

¹⁶ the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
and knows the knowledge of the Most High,

who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down, but having his eyes uncovered:

¹⁷ I see him, but not now;

I behold him, but not nigh:

a star shall come forth out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;

it shall crush the forehead^v of Moab,
and break down all the sons of Sheth.

¹⁸ Edom shall be dispossessed,
Se’ir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed,
while Israel does valiantly.

¹⁹ By Jacob shall dominion be exercised,
and the survivors of cities be destroyed!”

20 Then he looked on Am’alek,
and took up his discourse, and said,
“Am’alek was the first of the nations,
but in the end he shall come to destruction.”

21 And he looked on the Ken’ite,
and took up his discourse, and said,
“Enduring is your dwelling place,
and your nest is set in the rock;

²² nevertheless Kain shall be wasted.

How long shall Asshur take you
away captive?”

23 And he took up his discourse,
and said,

“Alas, who shall live when God does
this?”

²⁴ But ships shall come from Kittim
and shall afflict Asshur and Eber;
and he also shall come to
destruction.”

25 Then Balaam rose, and went
back to his place; and Balak also went
his way.

25 While Israel dwelt in Shittim
the people began to play the
harlot with the daughters of Moab.

² These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate,
and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel yoked himself to Ba’al of Pe’or.
And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; ⁴ and the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the chiefs of the people,
and hang them in the sun before the LORD, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.”

⁵ And Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Every one of you slay his men
who have yoked themselves to Ba’al of Pe’or.”

6 And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Mid’ianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping at the door of the tent of meeting. ⁷ When Phin’ehas the son of Elea’zar, son of Aaron the

^v Or closed or perfect ^w Heb corners (of the head)

(23.1-6; 24.1 n.). 15-19: The fourth oracle. 17-19: What he sees is *not now* but in the future: Israel will be victorious over Moab and Edom, a prophecy which was realized in the time of David (2 Sam.8.2,13-14). *A star . . . a scepter*, these royal symbols allude to David whose empire encompassed the promised land (see Gen.49.10 n.). 18: *Seir*, a synonym for Edom. 20-24: Supplementary oracles. 20: Ex.17.14-16. 21-24: The meaning of these verses is obscure, owing to the uncertainty of the names.

25.1-12: Incidents of apostasy in Moab. The protest against intermarriage with foreign peoples was based on the fear of the corruption of Israel’s faith (Dt.7.1-5). 1: *Shittim* (Abel-shittim), opposite Jericho. *Play the harlot*, compare Hos.2.5-13. 2: The Moabite women lured Israelites into idolatrous rites. *Ate*, a reference to a sacred meal in connection with the sacrifices (compare Ex.32.6). 3: *Baal*, the Canaanite god of storm and fertility who was worshiped at the cult center of Peor or Beth-peor (23.28; Dt.3.29). 4: The execution of the *chiefs* was an expiation for the people, according to the ancient conception of corporate guilt (compare 2 Sam.21.1-6). 5: *Judges*, Ex.18.25-26. 6-18: Phinehas’ zeal (compare Ex.32.25-29). 6: The story assumes an

priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation, and took a spear in his hand⁸ and went after the man of Israel into the inner room, and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman, through her body. Thus the plague was stayed from the people of Israel.⁹ Nevertheless those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

10 And the LORD said to Moses,¹¹ "Phin'ehas the son of Elea'zar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy.¹² Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace;¹³ and it shall be to him, and to his descendants after him, the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the people of Israel.'"

14 The name of the slain man of Israel, who was slain with the Mid'ianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, head of a fathers' house belonging to the Simeonites.¹⁵ And the name of the Mid'ianite woman who was slain was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, who was the head of the people of a fathers' house in Mid'ian.

16 And the LORD said to Moses,¹⁷ "Harass the Mid'ianites, and smite them;¹⁸ for they have harassed you with their wives, with which they beguiled you in the matter of Pe'or, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the prince of Mid'ian, their sister, who was slain on the day of the plague on account of Pe'or."

26 After the plague the LORD said to Moses and to Elea'zar the son of Aaron, the priest, ²"Take a

census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' houses, all in Israel who are able to go forth to war."³ And Moses and Elea'zar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying,⁴ "Take a census of the people,^x from twenty years old and upward," as the LORD commanded Moses. The people of Israel, who came forth out of the land of Egypt, were:

5 Reuben, the first-born of Israel; the sons of Reuben: of Hanoch, the family of the Ha'nochites; of Pallu, the family of the Pal'uites;⁶ of Hezron, the family of the Hez'ronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites.⁷ These are the families of the Reubenites; and their number was forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty.⁸ And the sons of Pallu: Eli'ab.⁹ The sons of Eli'ab: Nem'uel, Dathan, and Abi'ram. These are the Dathan and Abi'ram, chosen from the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD,¹⁰ and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a warning.¹¹ Notwithstanding, the sons of Korah did not die.

12 The sons of Simeon according to their families: of Nem'uel, the family of the Nem'uelites; of Jamin, the family of the Ja'minites; of Jachin, the family of the Ja'chinites;¹³ of Zerah, the family of the Zer'ahites; of Sha'ul, the family of the Sha'ulites.¹⁴ These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty-two thousand two hundred.

^x Supplying take a census of the people Compare verse 2

attempt to seduce Israelites into intermarriage with Midianites, with the result that divine judgment came in the form of a plague (v. 9). In 31.16 Balaam is blamed for this incident. 11: *Jealous*, or *zealous* (see Ex.34.14 n.; 1 Kg.19.10). 12: *A covenant of peace* (Ezek.34.25; 37.26) is one of welfare and well-being, based on right relation with God and harmonious relations in the community. 13: The Aaronic line, traced through Phinehas (Ex.6.25), is guaranteed a perpetual priesthood. 16-18: See ch. 31.

26.1-65: A second census is taken to ascertain the strength of the tribes and to allot the land. 5-50: See 1.5-15 n. 9-11: See ch. 16. 12-14: Simeon suffered the greatest loss during the wilder-

15 The sons of Gad according to their families: of Zephon, the family of the Ze'phonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites; ¹⁶ of Ozni, the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; ¹⁷ of Ar'od, the family of the Ar'odites; of Are'li, the family of the Are'lites. ¹⁸ These are the families of the sons of Gad according to their number, forty thousand five hundred.

19 The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ And the sons of Judah according to their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shela'nites; of Perez, the family of the Per'ezites; of Zerah, the family of the Zer'ahites. ²¹ And the sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hez'ronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamu'lites. ²² These are the families of Judah according to their number, seventy-six thousand five hundred.

23 The sons of Is'sachar according to their families: of Tola, the family of the To'laites; of Puvah, the family of the Punites; ²⁴ of Jashub, the family of the Jash'ubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shim'ronites. ²⁵ These are the families of Is'sachar according to their number, sixty-four thousand three hundred.

26 The sons of Zeb'ulun, according to their families: of Sered, the family of the Ser'edites; of Elon, the family of the E'lonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jah'leelites. ²⁷ These are the families of the Zeb'ulunites according to their number, sixty thousand five hundred.

28 The sons of Joseph according to their families: Manas'seh and E'phraim. ²⁹ The sons of Manas'seh: of Machir, the family of the Ma'chirites; and Machir was the father of Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. ³⁰ These are the sons of Gilead: of Ie'zer, the family of the Ie'zerites; of Helek, the family of the He'lekites;

³¹ and of As'riel, the family of the As'-rielites; and of Shechem, the family of the She'chemites; ³² and of Shemi'da, the family of the Shemi'daites; and of Hephher, the family of the He'pherites. ³³ Now Zeloph'ehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zeloph'ehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ³⁴ These are the families of Manas'seh; and their number was fifty-two thousand seven hundred.

35 These are the sons of E'phraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the family of the Bech'erites; of Tahan, the family of the Ta'hanites. ³⁶ And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the E'ranites. ³⁷ These are the families of the sons of E'phraim according to their number, thirty-two thousand five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph according to their families.

38 The sons of Benjamin according to their families: of Bela, the family of the Be'la-ites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ash'belites; of Ahi'ram, the family of the Ahi'ramites; ³⁹ of Shephu'pham, the family of the Shu'phamites; of Hupham, the family of the Hu'phamites. ⁴⁰ And the sons of Bela were Ard and Na'aman: of Ard, the family of the Ard'ites; of Na'aman, the family of the Na'amites. ⁴¹ These are the sons of Benjamin according to their families; and their number was forty-five thousand six hundred.

42 These are the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shu'hamites. These are the families of Dan according to their families. ⁴³ All the families of the Shu'hamites, according to their number, were sixty-four thousand four hundred.

44 The sons of Asher according to their families: of Imnah, the family of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites; of Beri'ah, the family of the

ness sojourn (compare 1.23; see Gen.49.5-7 n.). 28: The priority of Manasseh over Ephraim (1.10) points to a very old historical situation (Gen.48.13-22) and may indicate that this list is

Beri'ites. ⁴⁵ Of the sons of Beri'ah: of Heber, the family of the He'ber-ites; of Mal'chi-el, the family of the Mal'chi-elites. ⁴⁶ And the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah. ⁴⁷ These are the families of the sons of Asher according to their number, fifty-three thousand four hundred.

⁴⁸ The sons of Naph'tali according to their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jah'zeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; ⁴⁹ of Jezer, the family of the Je'zerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shil'lemites. ⁵⁰ These are the families of Naph'tali according to their families; and their number was forty-five thousand four hundred.

⁵¹ This was the number of the people of Israel, six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.

⁵² The LORD said to Moses: ⁵³ "To these the land shall be divided for inheritance according to the number of names. ⁵⁴ To a large tribe you shall give a large inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a small inheritance; every tribe shall be given its inheritance according to its numbers. ⁵⁵ But the land shall be divided by lot; according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. ⁵⁶ Their inheritance shall be divided according to lot between the larger and the smaller."

⁵⁷ These are the Levites as numbered according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Ko'hathites; of Merar'i, the family of the Merar'ites. ⁵⁸ These are the families of Levi: the family of the Libnites, the family of the He'bronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Ko'rahites. And Kohath was the father of Amram. ⁵⁹ The name of Amram's wife was Joch'ebed the daughter of Levi, who

was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister. ⁶⁰ And to Aaron were born Nadab, Abi'hu, Elea'zar and Ith'amar. ⁶¹ But Nadab and Abi'hu died when they offered unholy fire before the LORD. ⁶² And those numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and upward; for they were not numbered among the people of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the people of Israel.

⁶³ These were those numbered by Moses and Elea'zar the priest, who numbered the people of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. ⁶⁴ But among these there was not a man of those numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest, who had numbered the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. ⁶⁵ For the LORD had said of them, "They shall die in the wilderness." There was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephun'neh and Joshua the son of Nun.

27 Then drew near the daughters of Zeloph'ehad the son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manas'seh, from the families of Manas'seh the son of Joseph. The names of his daughters were: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ² And they stood before Moses, and before Elea'zar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, at the door of the tent of meeting, saying, ³ "Our father died in the wilderness; he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin; and he had no sons. ⁴ Why should the name of our father be taken away from his family, because he had no

older than that of ch. 1. ⁵¹: See 1.17-46 n. The priestly writer emphasizes God's marvelous power to sustain his people despite the almost complete change of population (vv. 63-65). ⁵²⁻⁵⁶: The census provided a basis for allotting land after the conquest. ⁵⁷⁻⁶²: The Levites, the landless tribe, are numbered separately. ⁶¹: See Lev. ch. 10.

27.1-11: Inheritance of property by women. 1: 26.33. 2-4: In Israel a family inheritance was to remain in the family (36.7; 1 Kg.21.3), thereby perpetuating the ancestral name. The request of the daughters of Zelophehad was unusual in that, according to ancient law, normally women

son? Give to us a possession among our father's brethren."

5 Moses brought their case before the LORD. ⁶ And the LORD said to Moses, ⁷ "The daughters of Zeloph'ehad are right; you shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. ⁸ And you shall say to the people of Israel, 'If a man dies, and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. ⁹ And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. ¹⁰ And if he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. ¹¹ And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it. And it shall be to the people of Israel a statute and ordinance, as the LORD commanded Moses.' "

12 The LORD said to Moses, "Go up into this mountain of Ab'arim, and see the land which I have given to the people of Israel. ¹³ And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was gathered, ¹⁴ because you rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin during the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Mer'ibah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) ¹⁵ Moses said to the LORD, ¹⁶ "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, ¹⁷ who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep which have no

shepherd." ¹⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him; ¹⁹ cause him to stand before Elea'zar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. ²⁰ You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey. ²¹ And he shall stand before Elea'zar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD; at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation." ²² And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; he took Joshua and caused him to stand before Elea'zar the priest and the whole congregation, ²³ and he laid his hands upon him, and commissioned him as the LORD directed through Moses.

28 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Command the people of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, my food for my offerings by fire, my pleasing odor, you shall take heed to offer to me in its due season.' ³ And you shall say to them, This is the offering by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs a year old without blemish, day by day, as a continual offering. ⁴ The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer in the evening; ⁵ also a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a cereal offering, mixed with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil. ⁶ It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained at Mount Sinai for a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD. ⁷ Its drink offering shall be a fourth of a hin for each lamb; in the holy place

did not inherit property. 5-11: Another example of how law developed as unprecedented situations were faced (see 9.8 n.). Compare also ch. 36.

27.12-23: Joshua commissioned to succeed Moses (Dt.31.14-15,23). 12: *Abarim*, a hilly region in which Mount Nebo, the scene of Moses' death, was located (Dt. ch. 34). 13: 20.22-29. 14: 20.12-13. *Meribah*, see Ex.17.7 n. 18-20: Like Moses, Joshua was held to be a charismatic leader, a man in whom is the spirit (11.17; 24.2). 21: *Urim*, see Ex.28.15-30 n. At Joshua's word, given in obedience to the sacred oracle, the people shall go out to battle and come in the camp (v. 17; Dt.3.28).

28.1-29.40: Offerings for various occasions. 2: *My food . . . my pleasing odor*, see Lev.1.9 n.

you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the LORD.⁸ The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; like the cereal offering of the morning, and like its drink offering, you shall offer it as an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

9 "On the sabbath day two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a cereal offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering:¹⁰ this is the burnt offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.

11 "At the beginnings of your months you shall offer a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish;¹² also three tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a cereal offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; and two tenths of fine flour for a cereal offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram;¹³ and a tenth of fine flour mixed with oil as a cereal offering for every lamb; for a burnt offering of pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD.¹⁴ Their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, a third of a hin for a ram, and a fourth of a hin for a lamb; this is the burnt offering of each month throughout the months of the year.¹⁵ Also one male goat for a sin offering to the LORD; it shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.

16 "On the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD's passover.¹⁷ And on the fifteenth day of this month is a feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.¹⁸ On the first day there shall be a holy convocation: you shall do no laborious work,¹⁹ but offer an offering by fire, a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old; see that they are

without blemish;²⁰ also their cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil; three tenths of an ephah shall you offer for a bull, and two tenths for a ram;²¹ a tenth shall you offer for each of the seven lambs;²² also one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you.²³ You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering.²⁴ In the same way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD; it shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.²⁵ And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work.

26 "On the day of the first fruits, when you offer a cereal offering of new grain to the LORD at your feast of weeks, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work,²⁷ but offer a burnt offering, a pleasing odor to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs a year old;²⁸ also their cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for each bull, two tenths for one ram,²⁹ a tenth for each of the seven lambs;³⁰ with one male goat, to make atonement for you.³¹ Besides the continual burnt offering and its cereal offering, you shall offer them and their drink offering. See that they are without blemish.

29 "On the first day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. It is a day for you to blow the trumpets,² and you shall offer a burnt offering, a pleasing odor to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish;³ also their cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for the bull, two tenths for the ram,⁴ and one tenth for each of the seven

and 21.6 n. 3-8: The daily sacrifice (Ex.29.38-42). 9-10: The sabbath offering is mentioned only here in the Pentateuch. 11-15: Since the year was based on a lunar calendar, a festival was held at each new moon (10.10; 1 Sam.20.5; Is.1.14; Am.8.5). 16-25: Unleavened bread (Ex.12.1-27; Lev.23.5-8). 26-31: Pentecost (Ex.23.16; 34.22; Lev.23.15-21). 29.1-6: New Year (Lev.23.

lambs; ⁵ with one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you; ⁶ besides the burnt offering of the new moon, and its cereal offering, and the continual burnt offering and its cereal offering, and their drink offering, according to the ordinance for them, a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD.

7 "On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation, and afflict yourselves; you shall do no work, ⁸ but you shall offer a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing odor: one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old; they shall be to you without blemish; ⁹ and their cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for the bull, two tenths for the one ram, ¹⁰ a tenth for each of the seven lambs: ¹¹ also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering and its cereal offering, and their drink offerings.

12 "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days; ¹³ and you shall offer a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD, thirteen young bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old; they shall be without blemish; ¹⁴ and their cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two tenths for each of the two rams, ¹⁵ and a tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; ¹⁶ also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its cereal offering and its drink offering.

17 "On the second day twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ¹⁸ with the cereal offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by number, according to the ordinance; ¹⁹ also

one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its cereal offering, and their drink offerings.

20 "On the third day eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ²¹ with the cereal offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by number, according to the ordinance; ²² also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its cereal offering and its drink offering.

23 "On the fourth day ten bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ²⁴ with the cereal offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by number, according to the ordinance; ²⁵ also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its cereal offering and its drink offering.

26 "On the fifth day nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ²⁷ with the cereal offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by number, according to the ordinance; ²⁸ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offerings and its cereal offering and its drink offering.

29 "On the sixth day eight bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ³⁰ with the cereal offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by number, according to the ordinance; ³¹ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, its cereal offering, and its drink offerings.

32 "On the seventh day seven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ³³ with the cereal offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by number, according to the ordinance;

23-25). 7-11: Day of atonement (Lev.16.29-34; 23.26-32). 12-38: The offering for the feast of booths (Lev.23.33-36) exceeds that of any other convocation.

³⁴ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, its cereal offering, and its drink offering.

35 "On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly: you shall do no laborious work, ³⁶ but you shall offer a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish, ³⁷ and the cereal offering and the drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, by number, according to the ordinance; ³⁸ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering and its cereal offering and its drink offering.

39 "These you shall offer to the LORD at your appointed feasts, in addition to your votive offerings and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your cereal offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings."

40^v And Moses told the people of Israel everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 Moses said to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, "This is what the LORD has commanded. ² When a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. ³ Or when a woman vows a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by a pledge, while within her father's house, in her youth, ⁴ and her father hears of her vow and of her pledge by which she has bound herself, and says nothing to her; then all her vows shall stand, and every pledge by which she has bound herself shall stand. ⁵ But if her father expresses disapproval to her on the day that he hears of it, no vow of hers, no pledge by which she has bound

herself, shall stand; and the LORD will forgive her, because her father opposed her. ⁶ And if she is married to a husband, while under her vows or any thoughtless utterance of her lips by which she has bound herself, ⁷ and her husband hears of it, and says nothing to her on the day that he hears; then her vows shall stand, and her pledges by which she has bound herself shall stand. ⁸ But if, on the day that her husband comes to hear of it, he expresses disapproval, then he shall make void her vow which was on her, and the thoughtless utterance of her lips, by which she bound herself; and the LORD will forgive her. ⁹ But any vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, anything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her. ¹⁰ And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by a pledge with an oath, ¹¹ and her husband heard of it, and said nothing to her, and did not oppose her; then all her vows shall stand, and every pledge by which she bound herself shall stand. ¹² But if her husband makes them null and void on the day that he hears them, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning her pledge of herself, shall not stand: her husband has made them void, and the LORD will forgive her. ¹³ Any vow and any binding oath to afflict herself, her husband may establish, or her husband may make void. ¹⁴ But if her husband says nothing to her from day to day, then he establishes all her vows, or all her pledges, that are upon her; he has established them, because he said nothing to her on the day that he heard of them. ¹⁵ But if he makes them null and void after he has heard of them, then he shall bear her iniquity."

16 These are the statutes which
y Ch 30.1 in Heb

30.1-16: On vows made by women. **2:** Vows made by men (Gen.28.20-22; Jg.11.30-31) are absolutely binding (compare Lev. ch. 27; Dt.23.21-23). **3-15:** These cases reflect a society in which woman was subordinate to the man of the family. He could nullify her vow if he felt that it was rash or thoughtless. **9:** The exception is a vow made by a woman when widowed or divorced. **13:** *Afflict herself*, i.e. by a vow of abstinence or discipline.

the LORD commanded Moses, as between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter, while in her youth, within her father's house.

31 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Avenge the people of Israel on the Mid'ianites; afterward you shall be gathered to your people." ³ And Moses said to the people, "Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Mid'ian, to execute the LORD's vengeance on Mid'ian. ⁴ You shall send a thousand from each of the tribes of Israel to the war." ⁵ So there were provided, out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. ⁶ And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand from each tribe, together with Phin'ehas the son of Elea'zar the priest, with the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. ⁷ They warred against Mid'ian, as the LORD commanded Moses, and slew every male. ⁸ They slew the kings of Mid'ian with the rest of their slain, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Mid'ian; and they also slew Balaam the son of Be'or with the sword. ⁹ And the people of Israel took captive the women of Mid'ian and their little ones; and they took as booty all their cattle, their flocks, and all their goods. ¹⁰ All their cities in the places where they dwelt, and all their encampments, they burned with fire, ¹¹ and took all the spoil and all the booty, both of man and of beast. ¹² Then they brought the captives and the booty and the spoil to Moses, and to Elea'zar the priest, and

to the congregation of the people of Israel, at the camp on the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho.

¹³ Moses, and Elea'zar the priest, and all the leaders of the congregation, went forth to meet them outside the camp. ¹⁴ And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. ¹⁵ Moses said to them, "Have you let all the women live? ¹⁶ Behold, these caused the people of Israel, by the counsel of Balaam, to act treacherously against the LORD in the matter of Pe'or, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD. ¹⁷ Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. ¹⁸ But all the young girls who have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves. ¹⁹ Encamp outside the camp seven days; whoever of you has killed any person, and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves and your captives on the third day and on the seventh day. ²⁰ You shall purify every garment, every article of skin, all work of goats' hair, and every article of wood."

²¹ And Elea'zar the priest said to the men of war who had gone to battle: "This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded Moses: ²² only the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead, ²³ everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean. Nevertheless it shall also be

31.1-54: Holy war against Midian. The reason for this war was the corrupting influence of Midianites at Peor (25.16-18). **3:** *The LORD's vengeance*, i.e. holy war in which the enemy was placed under the sacrificial ban (Ex.17.8-16). **6:** Phinehas was sent instead of Eleazar, for the high priest, more than other priests, had to avoid contact with the dead (Lev.21.10-15). Strangely, no mention is made of the ark going into battle. **8:** In contrast to early tradition which portrayed Balaam as an advocate for Israel (chs. 22-24), this priestly tradition holds him responsible for the apostasy at Peor (v. 16). **7:** Despite this annihilation, the Midianites were a formidable foe in a later period (Jg. ch. 6). **9-12:** According to the ideology of holy war, the enemy was offered as a sacrifice to the LORD (1 Sam. ch. 15). **19-24:** A major concern of the story is the removal of uncleanness through contact with the dead. See ch. 19 for the procedure for ceremonial purification. **20:** These articles could absorb uncleanness (Lev.11.24-38). **22-23:** Non-absorbent articles had to be subjected to fire as well as to *the water of impurity*

purified with the water of impurity; and whatever cannot stand the fire, you shall pass through the water. ²⁴ You must wash your clothes on the seventh day, and you shall be clean; and afterward you shall come into the camp."

²⁵ The LORD said to Moses, ²⁶ "Take the count of the booty that was taken, both of man and of beast, you and Elea'zar the priest and the heads of the fathers' houses of the congregation; ²⁷ and divide the booty into two parts, between the warriors who went out to battle and all the congregation. ²⁸ And levy for the LORD a tribute from the men of war who went out to battle, one out of five hundred, of the persons and of the oxen and of the asses and of the flocks; ²⁹ take it from their half, and give it to Elea'zar the priest as an offering to the LORD. ³⁰ And from the people of Israel's half you shall take one drawn out of every fifty, of the persons, of the oxen, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all the cattle, and give them to the Levites who have charge of the tabernacle of the LORD." ³¹ And Moses and Elea'zar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

³² Now the booty remaining of the spoil that the men of war took was: six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, ³³ seventy-two thousand cattle, ³⁴ sixty-one thousand asses, ³⁵ and thirty-two thousand persons in all, women who had not known man by lying with him. ³⁶ And the half, the portion of those who had gone out to war, was in number three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, ³⁷ and the LORD's tribute of sheep was six hundred and seventy-five. ³⁸ The cattle were thirty-six thousand, of which the LORD's tribute was seventy-two. ³⁹ The asses were thirty

thousand five hundred, of which the LORD's tribute was sixty-one. ⁴⁰ The persons were sixteen thousand, of which the LORD's tribute was thirty-two persons. ⁴¹ And Moses gave the tribute, which was the offering for the LORD, to Elea'zar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁴² From the people of Israel's half, which Moses separated from that of the men who had gone to war— ⁴³ now the congregation's half was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, ⁴⁴ thirty-six thousand cattle, ⁴⁵ and thirty thousand five hundred asses, ⁴⁶ and sixteen thousand persons— ⁴⁷ from the people of Israel's half Moses took one of every fifty, both of persons and of beasts, and gave them to the Levites who had charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁴⁸ Then the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, came near to Moses, ⁴⁹ and said to Moses, "Your servants have counted the men of war who are under our command, and there is not a man missing from us. ⁵⁰ And we have brought the LORD's offering, what each man found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and beads, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD." ⁵¹ And Moses and Elea'zar the priest received from them the gold, all wrought articles. ⁵² And all the gold of the offering that they offered to the LORD, from the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. ⁵³ (The men of war had taken booty, every man for himself.) ⁵⁴ And Moses and Elea'zar the priest received the gold from the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it

(19.9). **25-30:** The law for the distribution of booty. **27:** 1 Sam.30.24-25. **28-30:** The warriors were to contribute one-fifth of one per cent from their half of the booty to the high priest; this offering was regarded as *the LORD's tribute* (vv. 32-41). The people were to give two per cent from their half to the Levites (vv. 42-47). **50:** *Make atonement* (see Lev.1.4 n.), i.e. on account of ritual defilement by the dead.

into the tent of meeting, as a memorial for the people of Israel before the LORD.

32 Now the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle; and they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, and behold, the place was a place for cattle. ² So the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben came and said to Moses and to Elea'zar the priest and to the leaders of the congregation, ³ "At'aroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elea'leh, Sebam, Nebo, and Be'on, ⁴ the land which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle; and your servants have cattle." ⁵ And they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession; do not take us across the Jordan."

⁶ But Moses said to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, "Shall your brethren go to the war while you sit here? ⁷ Why will you discourage the heart of the people of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? ⁸ Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Ka'desh-bar'nea to see the land. ⁹ For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the people of Israel from going into the land which the LORD had given them. ¹⁰ And the LORD's anger was kindled on that day, and he swore, saying, ¹¹ 'Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me; ¹² none except Caleb the son of Jephun'neh the Ken'izzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.' ¹³ And the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made

them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was consumed. ¹⁴ And behold, you have risen in your fathers' stead, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel! ¹⁵ For if you turn away from following him, he will again abandon them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all this people."

¹⁶ Then they came near to him, and said, "We will build sheepfolds here for our flocks, and cities for our little ones, ¹⁷ but we will take up arms, ready to go before the people of Israel, until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones shall live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁸ We will not return to our homes until the people of Israel have inherited each his inheritance. ¹⁹ For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond; because our inheritance has come to us on this side of the Jordan to the east." ²⁰ So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will take up arms to go before the LORD for the war, ²¹ and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before the LORD, until he has driven out his enemies from before him ²² and the land is subdued before the LORD; then after that you shall return and be free of obligation to the LORD and to Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. ²³ But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out. ²⁴ Build cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do what you have promised." ²⁵ And the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben said to Moses, "Your servants will do as my lord commands. ²⁶ Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle,

32.1-42: The allotment of land in Transjordan to Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, on the condition that they help the other tribes in the battle for Canaan (Dt.3.12-22; Jos.13.8-32). **1:** *Jazer*, on the boundary of Ammon (21.24). **6:** Compare Jg.5.16-17. **8-13:** A summary of chs. 13-14. **20-23:** This is conceived as a holy war which imposed a sacred obligation upon all the tribal

shall remain there in the cities of Gilead; ²⁷ but your servants will pass over, every man who is armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord orders.”

28 So Moses gave command concerning them to Elea’zar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers’ houses of the tribes of the people of Israel. ²⁹ And Moses said to them, “If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, every man who is armed to battle before the LORD, will pass with you over the Jordan and the land shall be subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; ³⁰ but if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.” ³¹ And the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, “As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. ³² We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us beyond the Jordan.”

33 And Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Manas’sseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land and its cities with their territories, the cities of the land throughout the country. ³⁴ And the sons of Gad built Dibon, At’aroth, Aro’er, ³⁵ At’roth-sho’phan, Jazer, Jog’behah, ³⁶ Beth-nim’rah and Beth-har’an, fortified cities, and folds for sheep. ³⁷ And the sons of Reuben built Heshbon, Elea’leh, Kiriatha’im, ³⁸ Nebo, and Ba’al-me’on (their names to be changed), and Sibmah; and they

gave other names to the cities which they built. ³⁹ And the sons of Machir the son of Manas’sseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it. ⁴⁰ And Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manas’sseh, and he settled in it. ⁴¹ And Ja’ir the son of Manas’sseh went and took their villages, and called them Hav’voth-ja’ir.^z ⁴² And Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

33 These are the stages of the people of Israel, when they went forth out of the land of Egypt by their hosts under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. ² Moses wrote down their starting places, stage by stage, by command of the LORD; and these are their stages according to their starting places. ³ They set out from Ram’eses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the passover the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the Egyptians, ⁴ while the Egyptians were burying all their first-born, whom the LORD had struck down among them; upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

5 So the people of Israel set out from Ram’eses, and encamped at Succoth. ⁶ And they set out from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. ⁷ And they set out from Etham, and turned back to Pi-hahi’roth, which is east of Ba’al-ze’phon; and they encamped before Migdol. ⁸ And they set out from before Hahi’roth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and they went a three days’ journey in the wilderness of Etham, and

^z That is the villages of Jair

confederacy (Dt.33.21). 33: The half-tribe of Manasseh, i.e. the part that located east of the Jordan as distinguished from the part that settled in the region around Shechem (Jos.17.1-3). 34-36: Gad’s territory included part of the kingdom of Sihon (21.24), i.e. from Heshbon northward into Gilead (Jos.13.24-28). 37-38: Reuben’s territory extended from Heshbon south to the Arnon, the frontier of Moab (Jos.13.15-23). 39-42: Machir (26.29; see Gen.50.23 n.) received the territory of King Og (21.33), which included the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan (Jos.13.29-33). 41: Havvoth-jair, 1 Kg.4.13.

33.1-49: Israel’s itinerary from Egypt to the border of Canaan. 5-15: From the land of Goshen to Sinai (Ex.12.37-19.2). 8: Etham, otherwise designated as Shur (Ex.15.22). 16-36:

encamped at Marah. ⁹ And they set out from Marah, and came to Elim; at Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there. ¹⁰ And they set out from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea. ¹¹ And they set out from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. ¹² And they set out from the wilderness of Sin, and encamped at Dophkah. ¹³ And they set out from Dophkah, and encamped at Alush. ¹⁴ And they set out from Alush, and encamped at Reph'idim, where there was no water for the people to drink. ¹⁵ And they set out from Reph'idim, and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai. ¹⁶ And they set out from the wilderness of Sinai, and encamped at Kib'roth-hatta'avah. ¹⁷ And they set out from Kib'roth-hatta'avah, and encamped at Haze'roth. ¹⁸ And they set out from Haze'roth, and encamped at Rithmah. ¹⁹ And they set out from Rithmah, and encamped at Rim'mon-per'ez. ²⁰ And they set out from Rim'mon-per'ez, and encamped at Libnah. ²¹ And they set out from Libnah, and encamped at Rissah. ²² And they set out from Rissah, and encamped at Kehela'thah. ²³ And they set out from Kehela'thah, and encamped at Mount Shepher. ²⁴ And they set out from Mount Shepher, and encamped at Hara'dah. ²⁵ And they set out from Hara'dah, and encamped at Makhe'loth. ²⁶ And they set out from Makhe'loth, and encamped at Tahath. ²⁷ And they set out from Tahath, and encamped at Terah. ²⁸ And they set out from Terah, and encamped at Mithkah. ²⁹ And they set out from Mithkah, and encamped at Hashmo'nah. ³⁰ And they set out from Hashmo'nah, and encamped at Mose'roth. ³¹ And they set out from Mose'roth, and encamped at Bene-ja'akan. ³² And they set out from Bene-ja'akan, and encamped at Hor-haggid'gad. ³³ And they set out from

Hor-haggid'gad, and encamped at Jot'bathah. ³⁴ And they set out from Jot'bathah, and encamped at Abro'nah. ³⁵ And they set out from Abro'nah, and encamped at E'zion-ge'ber. ³⁶ And they set out from E'zion-ge'ber, and encamped in the wilderness of Zin (that is, Kadesh). ³⁷ And they set out from Kadesh, and encamped at Mount Hor, on the edge of the land of Edom.

³⁸ And Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the people of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. ³⁹ And Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

⁴⁰ And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the Negeb in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the people of Israel.

⁴¹ And they set out from Mount Hor, and encamped at Zalmo'nah. ⁴² And they set out from Zalmo'nah, and encamped at Punon. ⁴³ And they set out from Punon, and encamped at Oboth. ⁴⁴ And they set out from Oboth, and encamped at I'ye-ab'arim, in the territory of Moab. ⁴⁵ And they set out from I'yim, and encamped at Dibon-gad. ⁴⁶ And they set out from Dibon-gad, and encamped at Al'mon-diblatha'im. ⁴⁷ And they set out from Al'mon-diblatha'im, and encamped in the mountains of Ab'arim, before Nebo. ⁴⁸ And they set out from the mountains of Ab'arim, and encamped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho; ⁴⁹ they encamped by the Jordan from Beth-jes'himoth as far as Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

⁵⁰ And the LORD said to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, ⁵¹ "Say to the people of Israel, When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ⁵² then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the

From Sinai to Kadesh-barnea (Num.10.11-20.1). **37-49:** From Kadesh to the plains of Moab (20.22-22.1). The details of this phase of the itinerary, including the journey to Ezion-geber (v. 35), are not clear. **50-56:** Ex.23.23-33; Lev. ch. 26.

land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places; ⁵³ and you shall take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. ⁵⁴ You shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to a large tribe you shall give a large inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a small inheritance; wherever the lot falls to any man, that shall be his; according to the tribes of your fathers you shall inherit. ⁵⁵ But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell. ⁵⁶ And I will do to you as I thought to do to them."

34 ² The LORD said to Moses, "Command the people of Israel, and say to them, When you enter the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall to you for an inheritance, the land of Canaan in its full extent), ³ your south side shall be from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your southern boundary shall be from the end of the Salt Sea on the east; ⁴ and your boundary shall turn south of the ascent of Akrab'-bim, and cross to Zin, and its end shall be south of Ka'desh-bar'nea; then it shall go on to Ha'zar-ad'dar, and pass along to Azmon; ⁵ and the boundary shall turn from Azmon to the Brook of Egypt, and its termination shall be at the sea.

⁶ "For the western boundary, you shall have the Great Sea and its^a coast; this shall be your western boundary.

⁷ "This shall be your northern boundary: from the Great Sea you shall mark out your line to Mount Hor; ⁸ from Mount Hor you shall mark it out to the entrance of Hamath, and the end of the boundary shall be at Zedad; ⁹ then the boundary shall extend to Ziphron, and its end shall be at Ha'zar-e'nan; this shall be your northern boundary.

¹⁰ "You shall mark out your eastern boundary from Ha'zar-e'nan to Shepham; ¹¹ and the boundary shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of A'in; and the boundary shall go down, and reach to the shoulder of the sea of Chin'nereth on the east; ¹² and the boundary shall go down to the Jordan, and its end shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land with its boundaries all round."

¹³ Moses commanded the people of Israel, saying, "This is the land which you shall inherit by lot, which the LORD has commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe; ¹⁴ for the tribe of the sons of Reuben by fathers' houses and the tribe of the sons of Gad by their fathers' houses have received their inheritance, and also the half-tribe of Manas'seh; ¹⁵ the two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise."

¹⁶ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷ "These are the names of the men who shall divide the land to you for inheritance: Elea'zar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. ¹⁸ You shall take one leader of every tribe, to divide the land for inheritance. ¹⁹ These are the names of the men: Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephun'neh. ²⁰ Of the tribe of the sons

^a Syr: Heb lacks *its*

34.1-29: The ideal boundaries of the Promised Land (compare Jos.15.1-14; Ezek.47.13-20). **1-12:** The extent of the land, south to north, is essentially from *the brook of Egypt* (v. 5) to *the entrance of Hamath* (v. 8), near Riblah. Israel's territory did not extend so far north until the time of David (2 Sam.8.3-13; 1 Kg.8.65). Probably the tradition has visualized the past in the light of David, the "star" who arose out of Jacob (see 24.17-19 n.) to conquer the last of the opposing forces, thereby establishing in Israel's possession *the land of Canaan in its full extent* (v. 2). **14-15:** Jericho is said to be east, presupposing a standpoint within Canaan rather than in Transjordan.

of Simeon, Shemu'el the son of Ammi'hud. ²¹ Of the tribe of Benjamin, Eli'dad the son of Chislon. ²² Of the tribe of the sons of Dan a leader, Bukki the son of Jogli. ²³ Of the sons of Joseph: of the tribe of the sons of Manas'seh a leader, Han'niel the son of Ephod. ²⁴ And of the tribe of the sons of E'phraim a leader, Kemu'el the son of Shiphtan. ²⁵ Of the tribe of the sons of Zeb'ulun a leader, Eli-za'phan the son of Parnach. ²⁶ Of the tribe of the sons of Is'sachar a leader, Pal'tiel the son of Azzan. ²⁷ And of the tribe of the sons of Asher a leader, Ahi'hud the son of Shelo'mi. ²⁸ Of the tribe of the sons of Naph'tali a leader, Pedah'el the son of Ammi'hud. ²⁹ These are the men whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance for the people of Israel in the land of Canaan."

35 The LORD said to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, ² "Command the people of Israel, that they give to the Levites, from the inheritance of their possession, cities to dwell in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands round about the cities. ³ The cities shall be theirs to dwell in, and their pasture lands shall be for their cattle and for their livestock and for all their beasts. ⁴ The pasture lands of the cities, which you shall give to the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits all round. ⁵ And you shall measure, outside the city, for the east side two thousand cubits, and for the south side two thousand cubits, and for the west side two thousand cubits, and for the north side two thousand cubits, the city being in the middle; this shall belong to them as pasture land for their cities. ⁶ The cities

which you give to the Levites shall be the six cities of refuge, where you shall permit the manslayer to flee, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities. ⁷ All the cities which you give to the Levites shall be forty-eight, with their pasture lands. ⁸ And as for the cities which you shall give from the possession of the people of Israel, from the larger tribes you shall take many, and from the smaller tribes you shall take few; each, in proportion to the inheritance which it inherits, shall give of its cities to the Levites."

⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁰ "Say to the people of Israel, When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ¹¹ then you shall select cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person without intent may flee there. ¹² The cities shall be for you a refuge from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment. ¹³ And the cities which you give shall be your six cities of refuge. ¹⁴ You shall give three cities beyond the Jordan, and three cities in the land of Canaan, to be cities of refuge. ¹⁵ These six cities shall be for refuge for the people of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, that any one who kills any person without intent may flee there.

¹⁶ "But if he struck him down with an instrument of iron, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. ¹⁷ And if he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. ¹⁸ Or if he struck him down with a weapon of wood in the hand, by which a man

35.1-54: Plans for Levitical cities and cities of refuge. 1-8: Special cities were allotted because the Levites were not entitled to a tribal inheritance (Lev.25.32-34; Jos. ch. 21; 1 Chr.6.54-81). **9-15:** The six cities of refuge (Dt.4.41-43; 19.1-13; Jos. ch. 20) represent an attempt to restrain the tribal law of blood revenge so that a manslayer might receive a trial (v. 12). Early legislation stipulated that a man might seek asylum from the *avenger* or kinsman (Lev.25.25), whose duty it was to uphold family rights by killing the murderer or one of his relatives (see Ex.21. 12-14 n.). **16-34:** This case law distinguishes between murder and manslaughter. As a concession to ancient blood revenge, the tribunal lets the avenger exercise his role if the killing

may die, and he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death.¹⁹ The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death.²⁰ And if he stabbed him from hatred, or hurled at him, lying in wait, so that he died,²¹ or in enmity struck him down with his hand, so that he died, then he who struck the blow shall be put to death; he is a murderer; the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when he meets him.

22 "But if he stabbed him suddenly without enmity, or hurled anything on him without lying in wait,²³ or used a stone, by which a man may die, and without seeing him cast it upon him, so that he died, though he was not his enemy, and did not seek his harm;²⁴ then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood, in accordance with these ordinances;²⁵ and the congregation shall rescue the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge, to which he had fled, and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.²⁶ But if the manslayer shall at any time go beyond the bounds of his city of refuge to which he fled,²⁷ and the avenger of blood finds him outside the bounds of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood slays the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood.²⁸ For the man must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; but after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.

29 "And these things shall be for a statute and ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.³⁰ If any one kills a person, the

murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses; but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.³¹ Moreover you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death; but he shall be put to death.³² And you shall accept no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the high priest.³³ You shall not thus pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it.³⁴ You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell in the midst of the people of Israel."

36 The heads of the fathers' houses of the families of the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, son of Manas'seh, of the fathers' houses of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the heads of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel; ² they said, "The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for inheritance by lot to the people of Israel; and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zeloph'ehad our brother to his daughters. ³ But if they are married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the people of Israel then their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; so it will be taken away from the lot of our inheritance. ⁴ And when the jubilee of the people of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; and their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

was premeditated (vv. 19,21). **33-34:** Murder is a heinous offense because *blood pollutes the land* (Gen.4.10-11) in the midst of which the LORD dwells. Therefore only the blood of the murderer can expiate the crime (Dt.19.10,13).

36.1-12: Tribal property must be maintained intact. This law supplements 27.1-11 by stipulating that a woman who is allowed to inherit property must marry within her tribe. **1:** 26.28-34. **4:** On the jubilee year, see Lev.25.8-55. **6:** The law prevents tribal intermarriage only when

5 And Moses commanded the people of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, "The tribe of the sons of Joseph is right. ⁶ This is what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zeloph'ehad, 'Let them marry whom they think best; only, they shall marry within the family of the tribe of their father. ⁷ The inheritance of the people of Israel shall not be transferred from one tribe to another; for every one of the people of Israel shall cleave to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. ⁸ And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the people of Israel shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that every one of the people of Israel may possess the inheritance of his fathers. ⁹ So no inherit-

ance shall be transferred from one tribe to another; for each of the tribes of the people of Israel shall cleave to its own inheritance.' "

10 The daughters of Zeloph'ehad did as the LORD commanded Moses; ¹¹ for Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zeloph'ehad, were married to sons of their father's brothers. ¹² They were married into the families of the sons of Manas'seh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

13 These are the commandments and the ordinances which the LORD commanded by Moses to the people of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho.

the woman is an heiress. 13: A concluding statement covering all the laws given in Moab (22.1-36.12).

DEUTERONOMY

The basic theme of Deuteronomy, meaning the "second law," is the renewal of the covenant. Here the legal tradition of the book of Exodus (for example, the Decalogue or the Covenant Code) is not just repeated; it is reinterpreted in contemporary terms, so that the promises and demands of the covenant were brought near to every worshiping Israelite.

At the end of the book of Numbers Israel is encamped in the plains of Moab, prepared for an attack upon Canaan from the east. Deuteronomy is essentially Moses' farewell address to the people in which he rehearses the mighty acts of the Lord, solemnly warns of the temptations of the new ways of Canaan, and pleads for loyalty to and love of God as the condition for life in the promised land.

Actually Deuteronomy contains not one address by Moses, but three. The first is found in 1.6 to 4.40; the second in chs. 5-28; and the third in chs. 29 and 30. The remaining chapters (31-34) pick up the story where it was left at the end of Numbers (see Introduction to Pentateuch).

A distinctive teaching of Deuteronomy is that the worship of the LORD is to be centralized in one place, so that the paganism of local shrines may be eliminated (ch. 12). When Deuteronomy was published, the Jerusalem temple was regarded as the central sanctuary. Indeed, Deuteronomy was probably the "book of the law" which prompted Josiah's sweeping religious reform in 621 B.C. (2 Kg. chs. 22-23) and led to the revision of the history found in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Although Deuteronomy rests upon ancient tradition, fundamentally it is a rediscovery and reinterpretation of Mosaic teaching in the light of later historical understanding.

THESE ARE THE WORDS THAT MOSES spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah over against Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Haze'roth, and Di'-zahab. ² It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Se'-ir to Ka'desh-bar'nea. ³ And in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him in commandment to them, ⁴ after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ash'taroth and in Ed're-i. ⁵ Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to explain this law, saying, ⁶ "The LORD

our God said to us in Horeb, 'You have stayed long enough at this mountain; ⁷ turn and take your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland, and in the Negeb, and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphra'tes. ⁸ Behold, I have set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them.'

⁹ "At that time I said to you, 'I am not able alone to bear you; ¹⁰ the LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of

1.1-3.29: Historical review. Moses rehearses events since the departure from Sinai (Horeb) to show how the LORD marvelously guided his people in the wilderness. **1-5:** Introduction to the first address (1.6-4.40), which was given *beyond the Jordan*, i.e. in the plains of Moab (Num.33.48; 36.13). **1-2:** The places mentioned refer to the wilderness journey. **3:** *Fortieth year*, counting from the Exodus (Ex.19.1; 40.17). **4:** Num.21.21-35. **7:** *Amorites, Canaanites*, see Num.13.29 n. The Israelite empire extended ideally to the Euphrates (Gen.15.18), the northern limit of David's conquests (2 Sam.8.3). **9-18:** In this composite account (compare

heaven for multitude.¹¹ May the LORD, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are, and bless you, as he has promised you!¹² How can I bear alone the weight and burden of you and your strife?¹³ Choose wise, understanding, and experienced men, according to your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.’¹⁴ And you answered me, ‘The thing that you have spoken is good for us to do.’¹⁵ So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and set them as heads over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officers, throughout your tribes.¹⁶ And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien that is with him.’¹⁷ You shall not be partial in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God’s; and the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’¹⁸ And I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do.

¹⁹ “And we set out from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw, on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Ka’desh-bar’nea.²⁰ And I said to you, ‘You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God gives us.’²¹ Behold, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has told you; do not fear or be dismayed.’²² Then all of you came near me, and said, ‘Let us send men before us, that they may ex-

plore the land for us, and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up and the cities into which we shall come.’²³ The thing seemed good to me, and I took twelve men of you, one man for each tribe;²⁴ and they turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol and spied it out.²⁵ And they took in their hands some of the fruit of the land and brought it down to us, and brought us word again, and said, ‘It is a good land which the LORD our God gives us.’

²⁶ “Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;²⁷ and you murmured in your tents, and said, ‘Because the LORD hated us he has brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.’²⁸ Whither are we going up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, ‘The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.’”²⁹ Then I said to you, ‘Do not be in dread or afraid of them.’³⁰ The LORD your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes,³¹ and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the LORD your God bore you, as a man bears his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.’³² Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the LORD your God,³³ who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night, to show you by what way you should go, and in the cloud by day.

³⁴ “And the LORD heard your words, and was angered, and he swore,³⁵ ‘Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land which I swore to give to your fathers,

vv. 9–12 with Num.11.14–17 and vv. 13–17 with Ex.18.13–27) there is no reference to Jethro’s initiative to lighten Moses’ burden. 11: *The God of your fathers*, see Gen.26.24 n. 19–46: From Horeb to Kadesh: a summary of the spies’ reconnaissance of the land (Num. ch. 13), the people’s murmuring doubt about the LORD’s inability to fulfil his promise (Num.14.1–38), and the abortive attempt to penetrate Canaan from the south (Num.14.39–45; compare 21.1–3). 28: *Anakim*, see Num.13.22,33 n. 30: Ex.14.14. 33: *Fire . . . cloud*, see Ex.13.21–22 n. 37: Here

³⁶ except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land upon which he has trodden, because he has wholly followed the LORD! ³⁷ The LORD was angry with me also on your account, and said, 'You also shall not go in there; ³⁸ Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter; encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. ³⁹ Moreover your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall go in there, and to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. ⁴⁰ But as for you, turn, and journey into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea.'

⁴¹ "Then you answered me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And every man of you girded on his weapons of war, and thought it easy to go up into the hill country. ⁴² And the LORD said to me, 'Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not in the midst of you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.' ⁴³ So I spoke to you, and you would not hearken; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD, and were presumptuous and went up into the hill country. ⁴⁴ Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in Se'ir as far as Hormah. ⁴⁵ And you returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD did not hearken to your voice or give ear to you. ⁴⁶ So you remained at Kadesh many days, the days that you remained there.

2 "Then we turned, and journeyed into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea, as the LORD told me;

and for many days we went about Mount Se'ir. ² Then the LORD said to me, ³ 'You have been going about this mountain country long enough; turn northward. ⁴ And command the people, You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren the sons of Esau, who live in Se'ir; and they will be afraid of you. So take good heed; ⁵ do not contend with them; for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on, because I have given Mount Se'ir to Esau as a possession. ⁶ You shall purchase food from them for money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water of them for money, that you may drink. ⁷ For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands; he knows your going through this great wilderness; these forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.' ⁸ So we went on, away from our brethren the sons of Esau who live in Se'ir, away from the Arabah road from Elath and E'zi-on-ge'ber.

"And we turned and went in the direction of the wilderness of Moab. ⁹ And the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot for a possession.' ¹⁰ (The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; ¹¹ like the Anakim they are also known as Reph'aim, but the Moabites call them Emim. ¹² The Horites also lived in Se'ir formerly, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them, and destroyed them from before them, and settled in their stead; as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.) ¹³ 'Now rise up, and go over the

Moses is not punished for his own sin (Num.20.22-29; 27.12-23), but vicariously bears the divine wrath on Israel's account. 2.1-25: The circuit via Transjordan. 1-8a: Num.20.14-21. From Kadesh Israel turned south through the Arabah to the Gulf of Aqabah in order to go around Edom (Num.21.4; compare 33.43-49). 4: *Sons of Esau*, Gen.36.1. 8b-25: Num.21.4-20. Turning along the brook Zered (boundary of Edom), Israel detoured via the Moabite wilderness toward the Amorite kingdom of Sihon. 9: Moab and Ammon (v. 19) were traditionally related through Lot (Gen.19.36-38). 10-11: *Emim, Rephaim* (compare v. 20; 3.11-13), names

brook Zered.' So we went over the brook Zered.¹⁴ And the time from our leaving Ka'desh-bar'nea until we crossed the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until the entire generation, that is, the men of war, had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them.¹⁵ For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the camp, until they had perished.

16 "So when all the men of war had perished and were dead from among the people,¹⁷ the LORD said to me,¹⁸ 'This day you are to pass over the boundary of Moab at Ar;¹⁹ and when you approach the frontier of the sons of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.'²⁰ (That also is known as a land of Reph'aim; Reph'aim formerly lived there, but the Ammonites call them Zamzum'mim,²¹ a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they dispossessed them, and settled in their stead;²² as he did for the sons of Esau, who live in Se'ir, when he destroyed the Horites before them, and they dispossessed them, and settled in their stead even to this day.²³ As for the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caph'torim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and settled in their stead.)²⁴ 'Rise up, take your journey, and go over the valley of the Arnon; behold, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to take possession, and contend with him in battle.²⁵ This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

26 "So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Ked'emoth to Sihon the king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying,²⁷ 'Let me pass through your land; I will go only by the road, I will turn aside neither to the right nor to the left.'²⁸ You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot,²⁹ as the sons of Esau who live in Se'ir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I go over the Jordan into the land which the LORD our God gives to us.'³⁰ But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that he might give him into your hand, as at this day.³¹ And the LORD said to me, 'Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you; begin to take possession, that you may occupy his land.'³² Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Jahaz.³³ And the LORD our God gave him over to us; and we defeated him and his sons and all his people.³⁴ And we captured all his cities at that time and utterly destroyed every city, men, women, and children; we left none remaining;³⁵ only the cattle we took as spoil for ourselves, with the booty of the cities which we captured.³⁶ From Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and from the city that is in the valley, as far as Gilead, there was not a city too high for us; the LORD our God gave all into our hands.³⁷ Only to the land of the sons of Ammon you did not draw near, that is, to all the banks of the river Jabbok and the cities of the hill country, and wherever the LORD our God forbade us.

3 "Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan; and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Ed're-i.² But

which reflect the legend that the aborigines were giants. *Horites*, see Gen.36.20 n. 23: *Caphtor*, i.e. Crete. This verse refers to the conquest of the coastal plain by "sea-peoples" shortly after 1200 B.C. (see Gen.10.2-5 n.). 26-37: The victory over Sihon (Num.21.21-32), whose capital was at Heshbon. 30: See Ex.4.21 n. 37: The river Jabbok makes a wide bend south and thus forms the western border of Ammon (3.16). 3.1-11: The victory over Bashan (Num.21.33-35).

the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him; for I have given him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon the king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'³ So the LORD our God gave into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people; and we smote him until no survivor was left to him.⁴ And we took all his cities at that time—there was not a city which we did not take from them—sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.⁵ All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides very many unwall'd villages.⁶ And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon the king of Heshbon, destroying every city, men, women, and children.⁷ But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities we took as our booty.⁸ So we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon⁹ (the Sidonians call Hermon Si'rion, while the Amorites call it Senir),¹⁰ all the cities of the tableland and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Sal'cah and Ed're-i, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.¹¹ (For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Reph'aim; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.¹²)

12 "When we took possession of this land at that time, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory beginning at Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead with its cities;¹³ the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, that is,

all the region of Argob, I gave to the half-tribe of Manas'seh. (The whole of that Bashan is called the land of Reph'aim.¹⁴ Ja'ir the Manas'site took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Gesh'urites and the Ma-ac'athites, and called the villages after his own name, Hav'voth-ja'ir, as it is to this day.)¹⁵ To Machir I gave Gilead,¹⁶ and to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave the territory from Gilead as far as the valley of the Arnon, with the middle of the valley as a boundary, as far over as the river Jab-bok, the boundary of the Ammonites;¹⁷ the Arabah also, with the Jordan as the boundary, from Chin'nereth as far as the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

18 "And I commanded you at that time, saying, 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess; all your men of valor shall pass over armed before your brethren the people of Israel.¹⁹ But your wives, your little ones, and your cattle (I know that you have many cattle) shall remain in the cities which I have given you,²⁰ until the LORD gives rest to your brethren, as to you, and they also occupy the land which the LORD your God gives them beyond the Jordan; then you shall return every man to his possession which I have given you.'²¹ And I commanded Joshua at that time, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you are going over.²² You shall not fear them; for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.'

23 "And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,²⁴ 'O Lord GOD, thou hast only begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand; for

a Heb cubit of a man

1: *Edrei*, on extreme south border of Bashan. 11: The oversized bed of Og, one of the legendary Rephaim (2.10-11), was a "museum piece" in Rabbah, a city on the Ammonite border. 12-22: The allotment of tribal territories in Transjordan (Num. ch. 32; Jos. ch. 13). 14: Num.32.41. 17: The territory included the eastern part of the Jordan Valley or Arabah. 22: The whole story of the Exodus, wilderness journey, and invasion of Canaan is governed by the convictions of holy war: the LORD fights for his people; faith is response to his active leadership (20.1-20). 23-29: Num.27.12-23. 24: In contrast to the gods of pagan nature religions, the God of Israel

what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as thine? ²⁵ Let me go over, I pray, and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that goodly hill country, and Lebanon.' ²⁶ But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not hearken to me; and the LORD said to me, 'Let it suffice you; speak no more to me of this matter.' ²⁷ Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and behold it with your eyes; for you shall not go over this Jordan. ²⁸ But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him; for he shall go over at the head of this people, and he shall put them in possession of the land which you shall see.' ²⁹ So we remained in the valley opposite Bethpe'or.

4 "And now, O Israel, give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which I teach you, and do them; that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, gives you. ² You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it; that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ³ Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Ba'al-pe'or; for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Ba'al of Pe'or; ⁴ but you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive this day. ⁵ Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all

these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸ And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?

⁹ "Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children— ¹⁰ how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children so.' ¹¹ And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. ¹² Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. ¹³ And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the ten commandments;^b and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. ¹⁴ And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances, that you might do them in the land which you are going over to possess.

¹⁵ "Therefore take good heed to yourselves. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, ¹⁶ beware lest you act corruptly by

b Heb words

is unique, for his *mighty acts* testify that he is the LORD of history. **26:** On Moses' vicarious suffering, see 1.37 n. **27:** Mount *Pisgah*, see 34.1 n.

4.1-40: Conclusion to the first address. The preceding recital of what the LORD had done for his people is the basis of Moses' appeal for faithful obedience. **1-8:** The incident of Peor (Num. 25.1-9) teaches that obedience of God's law is the condition for life in Canaan and a testimony to the wisdom which the LORD graciously gives his people. **9-14:** The revelation at Sinai-Horeb (Ex. chs. 19-20) should be a constant reminder to *fear*, i.e. reverence, the LORD. **12:** At Horeb Israel heard the LORD's voice but *saw no form*—a warning against idolatry and image worship

making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷ the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, ¹⁸ the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. ¹⁹ And beware lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them and serve them, things which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. ²⁰ But the LORD has taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own possession, as at this day. ²¹ Furthermore the LORD was angry with me on your account, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance. ²² For I must die in this land, I must not go over the Jordan; but you shall go over and take possession of that good land. ²³ Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a graven image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. ²⁴ For the LORD your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.

²⁵ "When you beget children and children's children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a graven image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly per-

ish from the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess; you will not live long upon it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. ²⁸ And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of men's hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. ²⁹ But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice, ³¹ for the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not fail you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers which he swore to them.

³² "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. ³³ Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? ³⁴ Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. ³⁶ Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you; and

(vv. 15-18). **15-40:** The great exhortation. **16-18:** In pagan religions, gods were represented in both human and animal form. The imageless worship of the invisible God was a fundamental characteristic of Mosaic faith (Ex.20.4). Here it is grounded in the Sinai covenant (v. 23) and in God's creatorship (v. 32). **24:** *A jealous God*, see Ex.34.14 n. **27-29:** These verses allude to the exile of conquered populations, a policy used effectively by Assyrians and Babylonians. **31:** Divine wrath is a temporary reaction to specific situations; God is fundamentally and unchangeably *a merciful God* (Ex.34.6-7). **33:** Ex.20.18-26; 33.20. **34-36:** The LORD's mighty deeds in history, by which he chose and constituted Israel as his people, have demonstrated his sole deity: *there is no other beside him* (see Ex.20.3 n.). **36:** *Discipline you*, Ex.20.20. **37:** A new

on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire.³⁷ And because he loved your fathers and chose their descendants after them, and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power,³⁸ driving out before you nations greater and mightier than yourselves, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as at this day;³⁹ know therefore this day, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.⁴⁰ Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you this day, that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God gives you for ever.”

41 Then Moses set apart three cities in the east beyond the Jordan,⁴² that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without being at enmity with him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might save his life:⁴³ Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland for the Reubenites, and Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manas'sites.

44 This is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel;⁴⁵ these are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances, which Moses spoke to the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt,⁴⁶ beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-pe'or, in the land of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated when they came out of Egypt.⁴⁷ And they took

possession of his land and the land of Og the king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who lived to the east beyond the Jordan;⁴⁸ from Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, as far as Mount Si'ri'on^c (that is, Hermon),⁴⁹ together with all the Arabah on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah.

5 And Moses summoned all Israel, and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your hearing this day, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them.² The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.³ Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day.⁴ The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire,⁵ while I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

6 “‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

7 “‘You shall have no other gods before^d me.

8 “‘You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;⁹ you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who

c Syr: Heb Slo d Or besides

element is added to the theological tradition: the LORD's election of Israel was based upon his love. Israel's obedience, therefore, should be motivated by a responding love (6.4-5). *Presence*, Ex.33.14. 41-43: An appendix dealing with cities of refuge (see ch. 19).

5.1-26.19 (and ch. 28): Moses' second address. 4.44-49: Introduction. 5.1-33: The giving of the law at Sinai. 1: *Hear*, a frequently repeated verb, indicating that Deuteronomy is a sermon which interprets Israel's covenant responsibilities. 2-3: The making of the covenant (Ex. ch. 24) was not just a past ceremony involving another generation but it is a contemporary covenant with us, who are all of us here alive this day (see Ex.13.8 n.). The language may reflect a liturgy in which the covenant was periodically recalled and renewed (26.16-19; 31.10-11). 6-21: This version of the Decalogue differs only slightly from that in Ex.20.2-17.

hate me, ¹⁰ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

11 “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

12 “Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. ¹⁵ You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

16 “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you; that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you, in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

17 “You shall not kill.

18 “Neither shall you commit adultery.

19 “Neither shall you steal.

20 “Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.

21 “Neither shall you covet your neighbor’s wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s.’

22 “These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice;

and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them to me. ²³ And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; ²⁴ and you said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire; we have this day seen God speak with man and man still live. ²⁵ Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, we shall die. ²⁶ For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire, as we have, and has still lived? ²⁷ Go near, and hear all that the LORD our God will say; and speak to us all that the LORD our God will speak to you; and we will hear and do it.’

28 “And the LORD heard your words, when you spoke to me; and the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you; they have rightly said all that they have spoken. ²⁹ Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their children for ever! ³⁰ Go and say to them, “Return to your tents.” ³¹ But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you all the commandment and the statutes and the ordinances which you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess.’ ³² You shall be careful to do therefore as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ³³ You shall walk in all the way which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that

22-23: While the Decalogue was given directly to the people (vv. 4-5; compare 4.10-13), the rest of the laws were mediated to the people through Moses (v. 31; 4.14). **23-27:** 4.33; Ex.20.18-21.

31: Moses is no mere legislator but is a teacher or expositor of God’s will (1.5). Hence the *statutes and the ordinances* (chs. 12-26; compare Ex.20.23-23.19) are expressed in a *sermonic* appeal to do God’s will in the concrete situations of life.

you may live long in the land which you shall possess.

6 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it; ² that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them; that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; ⁵ and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶ And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; ⁷ and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

10 "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you, with

great and goodly cities, which you did not build, ¹¹ and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, ¹² then take heed lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ¹³ You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him, and swear by his name. ¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples who are round about you; ¹⁵ for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. ¹⁷ You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he has commanded you. ¹⁸ And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers ¹⁹ by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has promised.

20 "When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD our God has commanded you?' ²¹ then you

*e Or the LORD our God, the LORD is one
Or the LORD is our God, the LORD is one
Or the LORD is our God, the LORD alone*

6.1-25: The meaning of the first commandment. 1: In this chapter Moses deals with *the commandment*; in a later section he explains *the statutes and the ordinances* (see 5.31 n.). 3: A characteristic Deuteronomic note: reverent obedience will result in divine blessings of long life, fruitfulness, and welfare (5.33; 6.18-19). Thus the promise made to the fathers will be fulfilled (Gen.12.1-7; Ex.3.16-17). *Milk and honey*, see Ex.3.8 n. 4-9: In Jewish tradition these verses are known as the Shema, from the first word in the Hebrew ("shema"), which means "Hear." 4-5: The great commandment (Mk.12.29-30) is essentially a restatement of the first commandment of the Decalogue in positive form. There are not many gods but *one LORD* who is sovereign and unique; thus Israel is to have only one loyalty. *Heart* (mind, will), *soul* (self, vital being), *might* express the idea of loving God (see 4.37 n.) with the full measure of one's devotion. 8-9: Putting this law on the hand, forehead, and doorpost (compare Ex.13.9) signifies that it is to be *upon your heart* (v. 6), i.e. constantly thought about and acted upon. 10-19: See ch. 8. 13: The love of God is blended with fear, i.e. reverence before God's holy majesty (4.9-15). 15: Divine jealousy is associated with divine wrath (4.24; Jos.24.20-21); both are expressions of the

shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; ²² and the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes; ²³ and he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land which he swore to give to our fathers. ²⁴ And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. ²⁵ And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.'

7 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Gir'gashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, seven nations greater and mightier than yourselves, ² and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, and show no mercy to them. ³ You shall not make marriages with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons. ⁴ For they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. ⁵ But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break

down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Ashe'rim, and burn their graven images with fire.

6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, ¹⁰ and requites to their face those who hate him, by destroying them; he will not be slack with him who hates him, he will requite him to his face. ¹¹ You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you this day.

12 "And because you hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love which he swore to your fathers to keep; ¹³ he will love you, bless you, and multiply you; he will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of

LORD's holiness which will not tolerate idolatry. **16:** See Ex.17.2-7; compare Mt.4.7. **20-25:** Compare v. 7; Ex.13.14-16. Children are to be taught the marvelous story of God's redeeming acts which is the background and basis of the law. **21-23:** See 26.5-10 n.

7.1-26: Life in Canaan. Having dealt with the heart of the law (the Decalogue and the great commandment; chs. 5-6), Moses now interprets what it means to be God's people in the new land. **1-5:** This holy war is based on the fear of the corrupting influence of Canaanite culture (v. 16; Ex.23.23-33; 34.11-16). **1:** On the pre-Israelite peoples, see Gen.10.15-20. **2: Utterly destroy**, see Jos.6.17 n. **5: Pillars, Asherim** (see Ex.34.13 n.). **6-16:** An uncompromising attitude toward the nations is required because Israel is *a people holy to the LORD* (Ex.19.5-6), i.e. a people separated for a special service to God (see Lev. 19.2 n.); therefore Israel is not to be a nation like other nations (Num.23.9; 1 Sam.8.4-22). **7-8:** The election of Israel is not based upon her greatness or goodness (9.4-6) but upon the LORD's gracious love and his faithfulness to the promise made to the patriarchs. **9-10:** Ex.34.6-7. *Covenant*, see Gen.17.2 n. *Steadfast love*, see Gen.24.12 n. **12-14:** The blessings of fertility do not come from the nature gods of

your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the young of your flock, in the land which he swore to your fathers to give you. ¹⁴ You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. ¹⁵ And the LORD will take away from you all sickness; and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will he inflict upon you, but he will lay them upon all who hate you. ¹⁶ And you shall destroy all the peoples that the LORD your God will give over to you, your eye shall not pity them; neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

¹⁷ "If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?' ¹⁸ you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, ¹⁹ the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out; so will the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. ²⁰ Moreover the LORD your God will send hornets among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed. ²¹ You shall not be in dread of them; for the LORD your God is in the midst of you, a great and terrible God. ²² The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you may not make an end of them at once,^f lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. ²³ But the LORD your God will give them over to you, and throw them into great confusion, until they are de-

stroyed. ²⁴ And he will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven; not a man shall be able to stand against you, until you have destroyed them.

²⁵ The graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. ²⁶ And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house, and become accursed like it; you shall utterly detest and abhor it; for it is an accursed thing.

8 "All the commandment which I command you this day you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers. ² And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out upon you, and your foot did not swell, these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. ⁶ So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him. ⁷ For the

f Or quickly

Canaan but are bestowed by Israel's God, the LORD of history (Hos. ch. 2). **15:** *Evil diseases*, a reference to the plagues of Egypt. **17-26:** Israel should not fear mighty nations, for, according to the Israelite concept of holy war, *the LORD your God is in the midst of you* (20.1-4). These verses echo ideas found in Ex.23.20-33. **20:** *Hornets*, see Ex.23.27-28 n.; Jos.24.12. **22:** Ex. 23.29-30.

8.1-20: The temptation to pride and self-sufficiency. Moses warns the people that success in Canaan will tempt them to forget the wilderness lesson of complete dependence upon God's mercies. **1-10:** An appeal to Israel's memory: in the wilderness God cared for his people daily (Ex.12.37-17.16; Num. chs. 11-14). **3:** *Manna*, see Ex. ch. 16; Num.11.7,8. **5:** Suffering is here interpreted as discipline, analogous to a father's correction of his son (Hos. ch. 11; Heb.12.3-

LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

11 "Take heed lest you forget the LORD your God, by not keeping his commandments and his ordinances and his statutes, which I command you this day: ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. ¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' ¹⁸ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth; that he may confirm his covenant which he swore to your fathers, as at this day. ¹⁹ And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and

worship them, I solemnly warn you this day that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

9 "Hear, O Israel; you are to pass over the Jordan this day, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves, cities great and fortified up to heaven, ² a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' ³ Know therefore this day that he who goes over before you as a devouring fire is the LORD your God; he will destroy them and subdue them before you; so you shall drive them out, and make them perish quickly, as the LORD has promised you.

4 "Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you. ⁵ Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

6 "Know therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness; for you are a stubborn people. ⁷ Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day you came out of the land of Egypt,

11). The purpose of God is to humble Israel's pride and to test the quality of faith. 11-20: The peril of prosperity. 15: *Fiery serpents*, Num.21.6-9. *Water out of the flinty rock*, Num.20.2-13.

9.1-10.11: **The temptation to self-righteousness.** God does not give the land to his people as a reward for righteousness, for in the wilderness they proved to be a rebellious people. 2: See Num.13.22 n. 4-5: Victory will be given in the holy war because (negatively) Canaan has been corrupted by pagan religions and because (positively) the LORD is faithful to his promise. 6-24: The historical record shows that Israel has been rebellious ever since the Exodus (Ezek.

until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. ⁸ Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, and the LORD was so angry with you that he was ready to destroy you. ⁹ When I went up the mountain to receive the tables of stone, the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water. ¹⁰ And the LORD gave me the two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.

¹¹ And at the end of forty days and forty nights the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, the tables of the covenant. ¹² Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go down quickly from here; for your people whom you have brought from Egypt have acted corruptly; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molten image.'

¹³ "Furthermore the LORD said to me, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people; ¹⁴ let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.' ¹⁵ So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. ¹⁶ And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God; you had made yourselves a molten calf; you had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. ¹⁷ So I took hold of the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and broke them before your eyes. ¹⁸ Then I lay prostrate before the LORD as before, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank

water, because of all the sin which you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. ¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure which the LORD bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened to me that time also. ²⁰ And the LORD was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him; and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. ²¹ Then I took the sinful thing, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw the dust of it into the brook that descended out of the mountain.

²² "At Tab'erah also, and at Mas-sah, and at Kib'roth-hatta'avah, you provoked the LORD to wrath. ²³ And when the LORD sent you from Ka'desh-bar'nea, saying, 'Go up and take possession of the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and did not believe him or obey his voice. ²⁴ You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

²⁵ "So I lay prostrate before the LORD for these forty days and forty nights, because the LORD had said he would destroy you. ²⁶ And I prayed to the LORD, 'O Lord God, destroy not thy people and thy heritage, whom thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, whom thou hast brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²⁷ Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not regard the stubbornness of this people, or their wickedness, or their sin, ²⁸ lest the land from which thou didst bring us say, "Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness." ²⁹ For they are thy people and thy heritage, whom thou didst bring

20.5-8). 8-10: Ex.24.12-18; 31.18. 11-21: Ex. ch. 32. 22: Num.11.1-3; Ex.17.1-7; and Num. 11.31-34. 23: Num. chs. 13-14. 25-29: A paraphrase of Ex.32.11-14. In Deuteronomy Moses is portrayed as the ideal prophet (34.10-12) who intercedes for the people and who bears their

out by thy great power and by thy outstretched arm.'

10 "At that time the LORD said to me, 'Hew two tables of stone like the first, and come up to me on the mountain, and make an ark of wood.' ² And I will write on the tables the words that were on the first tables which you broke, and you shall put them in the ark.' ³ So I made an ark of acacia wood, and hewed two tables of stone like the first, and went up the mountain with the two tables in my hand. ⁴ And he wrote on the tables, as at the first writing, the ten commandments^g which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. ⁵ Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the LORD commanded me.

⁶ (The people of Israel journeyed from Be-er'oth Bene-ja'akan^h to Mose'rah. There Aaron died, and there he was buried; and his son Elea'zar ministered as priest in his stead. ⁷ From there they journeyed to Gud'-godah, and from Gud'-godah to Jot'-bathah, a land with brooks of water. ⁸ At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. ⁹ Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; the LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God said to him.)

¹⁰ "I stayed on the mountain, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights, and the LORD hearkened to me that time also; the LORD was unwilling to destroy you. ¹¹ And the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.'

¹² "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I command you this day for your good? ¹⁴ Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; ¹⁵ yet the LORD set his heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day. ¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. ¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. ¹⁸ He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. ²⁰ You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him and cleave to him, and by his name you shall swear. ²¹ He is your praise; he

^g Heb words ^h Or the wells of the Bene-jaakan

sins (1.37; compare Is. ch. 53). **10:1-11:** The second ascent of the mountain (Ex.34.1-4,27-28). **1-3:** These verses rest on an ancient tradition that Moses made the ark and put the stone tablets in it (1 Kg.8.9; see Ex.24.15-18 n.). **6-9:** An editorial insertion which in vv. 6-7 apparently quotes from a wilderness itinerary (compare Num.33.30-38). **6:** Num.20.22-29. **8:** Ex.32.25-29. The Levites' role is to bear the ark (Num.4.4-15), to *minister*, i.e. conduct the sacrificial services (Num. ch. 18), and to *bless* (Num.6.22-27).

10.12-11.32. What the LORD requires. This section is the climax and conclusion of the historical review found in ch. 8 and 9.1-10.11. **12:** God's gracious dealings form the background and presupposition of his requirements (compare Mic.6.1-8). **16:** *Circumcise the . . . heart* means to open the mind, to direct the will toward God (see Lev.26.41 n.). **17-18:** God's justice is disclosed in his impartiality and in his defense of the legally helpless. *The sojourner*, who resided within the covenant community without tribal status, was in danger of exploitation. **19:** Ex.22.21; 23.9; Lev.19.34. This verse implies the second great commandment of Lev.

is your God, who has done for you these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen. ²² Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons; and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven for multitude.

||| "You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and keep his charge, his statutes, his ordinances, and his commandments always. ² And consider this day (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the disciplineⁱ of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, ³ his signs and his deeds which he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land; ⁴ and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD has destroyed them to this day; ⁵ and what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place; ⁶ and what he did to Dathan and Abi'ram the sons of Eli'ab, son of Reuben; how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel; ⁷ for your eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD which he did.

8 "You shall therefore keep all the commandment which I command you this day, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land which you are going over to possess, ⁹ and that you may live long in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk

and honey. ¹⁰ For the land which you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your feet, like a garden of vegetables; ¹¹ but the land which you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, ¹² a land which the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

13 "And if you will obey my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴ heⁱ will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. ¹⁵ And heⁱ will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be full. ¹⁶ Take heed lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, ¹⁷ and the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which the LORD gives you.

18 "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹⁹ And you shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down,

i Or instruction *j* Sam Gk Vg: Heb *i*

19.17-18. **22:** *Seventy persons*, Ex.1.5. **11.1-26:** Loyalty to the covenant is the condition for life in Canaan. **2:** The words *this day* appear frequently in Deuteronomy to emphasize the contemporaneity of the covenant demands and promises (see 5.2-3 n.). *Discipline*, see 8.5 n. **6:** The address follows the early tradition of Num. ch. 16 concerning the revolt of Dathan and Abiram; note the silence about Korah's rebellion (Num.16.3-11). **10-12:** The Nile valley must be irrigated through human effort; Palestine, however, is dependent upon seasonal rainfall. This difference is mentioned to show Israel's dependence upon the LORD, who gives and withholds rain (Am.4.7-9). **14:** The *early rain* comes at the end of the summer drought (October-November); the *later rain* comes in the spring (March-April). **16-17:** See 7.12-14 n. **18-21:** 6.6-9. **24:** The territory is described in terms of the ideal limits of David's empire (see 1.7 n.).

and when you rise. ²⁰ And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates, ²¹ that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. ²² For if you will be careful to do all this commandment which I command you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and cleaving to him, ²³ then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves. ²⁴ Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall be from the wilderness and Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. ²⁵ No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you.

²⁶ "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day, ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which you have not known. ²⁹ And when the LORD your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the

blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. ³⁰ Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oak^k of Moreh? ³¹ For you are to pass over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land which the LORD your God gives you; and when you possess it and live in it, ³² you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

12 "These are the statutes and ordinances which you shall be careful to do in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live upon the earth. ² You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains and upon the hills and under every green tree; ³ you shall tear down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Ashe'rim with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their name out of that place. ⁴ You shall not do so to the LORD your God. ⁵ But you shall seek the place which the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there; thither you shall go, ⁶ and thither you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes

^k GK Syr: See Gen 12.6. Heb oaks or terebinths

The western sea, the Mediterranean. **26-32**: The two ways (see ch. 28; 30.15-20). **26: Blessing . . . curse**, an echo of an ancient ceremony of covenant renewal inaugurated at Shechem (v. 29; see ch. 27). The people stand in a time of solemn decision, facing the alternatives of divine blessing or divine judgment. **29-30**: See ch. 27. *The oak of Moreh* was near Shechem (see Gen.12.6 n.).

12.1-31: The centralization of worship. Israel is to worship the LORD at the central sanctuary of his choice and to make sacrifices only at this place. **1**: Here begins the exposition of *the statutes and the ordinances* (see 5.31 n.) found in chs. 12-26. **3**: See Ex.34.13 n. **4**: The following law concerning the centralization of worship is intended to guard Israel from the paganism which flourished in local shrines (vv. 29-31). **5-7**: During the period of the tribal confederacy pilgrimages were made to Shiloh (Jos.18.1; 1 Sam.1.3-28), and under the leadership of David Jerusalem became the central sanctuary of Israel (2 Sam. ch. 6). During this whole period pilgrimages to the sanctuary did not preclude sacrificing at any altar in the land (Gen.12.7; 1 Sam.10.8; 1 Kg.3.2,4). The present stringent law, providing for only one place for sacrificial worship, was the basis of the great reform carried out by King Josiah (2 Kg. chs. 22-23). **5**: Although the LORD's dwelling place is in heaven (1 Kg.8.27-30), his *name* (see Gen.32.27 n.),

and the offering that you present, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock; ⁷ and there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the LORD your God has blessed you. ⁸ You shall not do according to all that we are doing here this day, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; ⁹ for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the LORD your God gives you. ¹⁰ But when you go over the Jordan, and live in the land which the LORD your God gives you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you live in safety, ¹¹ then to the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, thither you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present, and all your votive offerings which you vow to the LORD. ¹² And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your menservants and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. ¹³ Take heed that you do not offer your burnt offerings at every place that you see; ¹⁴ but at the place which the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

15 "However, you may slaughter and eat flesh within any of your towns,

as much as you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which he has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the hart. ¹⁶ Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out upon the earth like water. ¹⁷ You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your wine or of your oil, or the firstlings of your herd or of your flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the offering that you present; ¹⁸ but you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite who is within your towns; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all that you undertake. ¹⁹ Take heed that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

20 "When the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat flesh,' because you crave flesh, you may eat as much flesh as you desire. ²¹ If the place which the LORD your God will choose to put his name there is too far from you, then you may kill any of your herd or your flock, which the LORD has given you, as I have commanded you; and you may eat within your towns as much as you desire. ²² Just as the gazelle or the hart is eaten, so you may eat of it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. ²³ Only be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh.

in which his person or nature is manifest, represents him in the sanctuary, and in this sense he makes his *habitation* there (v. 11). **6:** For the types of sacrifice, see Lev. chs. 1-7. *Votive offerings*, Lev. ch. 27; Num. ch. 30. **7:** *Eat before the LORD* refers to certain offerings which must be eaten at the sanctuary, such as the tithe (14.22-28) or the peace offering (Lev. ch. 3). **12:** *The Levite*, see 18.1 n. **15-28:** Now that sacrifice is made only at the central sanctuary, a distinction is drawn between sacrifice and slaughter of animals for food, thus modifying earlier legislation (Lev.17.1-9). **15-16:** When eating slaughtered meat in a town, it is not necessary to observe the laws of ceremonial cleanness (Lev.7.19-21), for slaughtered meat may be considered in the same category as game (e.g. gazelle or deer). However, the ancient prohibition against eating blood must be maintained (vv. 23-24; see Gen.9.3-4; Lev.17.10-11). **17-18:** *Holy things* (v. 26) which belong by right, or by dedication, to the LORD must be eaten at the central

²⁴ You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out upon the earth like water. ²⁵ You shall not eat it; that all may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD. ²⁶ But the holy things which are due from you, and your votive offerings, you shall take, and you shall go to the place which the LORD will choose, ²⁷ and offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, but the flesh you may eat. ²⁸ Be careful to heed all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you for ever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

²⁹ "When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, ³⁰ take heed that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do likewise.' ³¹ You shall not do so to the LORD your God; for every abominable thing which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

³² "Everything that I command you you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it or take from it.

13 "If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the

sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him, and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and cleave to him. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.

⁶ "If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which neither you nor your fathers have known, ⁷ some of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, ⁸ you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him; ⁹ but you shall kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. ¹⁰ You shall stone him to death

1 Ch 13.1 in Heb

sanctuary. **31:** Every abominable thing, e.g. sacred prostitution (23.17–18) and ordeal by fire (see 18.10 n.).

12.32–13.18: Warning against idolatry. Subversives who entice their fellow men into the worship of other gods must be eliminated from the covenant community. **13.1–5:** The false prophet (Jer.23.9–32; Ezek. ch. 13). **1:** Dreams were regarded as a medium of divine communication to a prophet (Num.12.6; 22.20; 1 Sam.3.15; 28.6; Jer.23.25). This law makes it clear that a *sign or wonder* (see Ex.3.11–12 n.) is not in itself a proof that God has spoken, for God may give false prophets power to perform wonders in order to test the people's faith (compare 8.2). A miracle is not significant unless it prompts faith in the God whom Israel has *known* (vv. 6,13) in her historical experience. **5:** The punishment is severe because idolatry contaminates the health or holiness of the community. **6–11:** The same punishment applies to close friends or

with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

¹¹ And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and never again do any such wickedness as this among you.

¹² "If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell there, ¹³ that certain base fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of the city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, ¹⁴ then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently; and behold, if it be true and certain that such an abominable thing has been done among you, ¹⁵ you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, destroying it utterly, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. ¹⁶ You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square, and burn the city and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God; it shall be a heap for ever, it shall not be built again. ¹⁷ None of the devoted things shall cleave to your hand; that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and show you mercy, and have compassion on you, and multiply you, as he swore to your fathers, ¹⁸ if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping all his commandments which I command you this day, and doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.

14 "You are the sons of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead. ² For you are a people holy to the LORD your

God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth.

³ "You shall not eat any abominable thing. ⁴ These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, ⁵ the hart, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain-sheep. ⁶ Every animal that parts the hoof and has the hoof cloven in two, and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. ⁷ Yet of those that chew the cud or have the hoof cloven you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, are unclean for you. ⁸ And the swine, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch.

⁹ "Of all that are in the waters you may eat these: whatever has fins and scales you may eat. ¹⁰ And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.

¹¹ "You may eat all clean birds. ¹² But these are the ones which you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, ¹³ the buzzard, the kite, after their kinds; ¹⁴ every raven after its kind; ¹⁵ the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk, after their kinds; ¹⁶ the little owl and the great owl, the water hen ¹⁷ and the pelican, the carrion vulture and the cormorant, ¹⁸ the stork, the heron, after their kinds; the hoopoe and the bat. ¹⁹ And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten. ²⁰ All clean winged things you may eat.

²¹ "You shall not eat anything that

family members who entice one into idolatry. **10:** Stoning is prescribed because this is a communal mode of purging the evil which threatens the community (17.2-7). **12-18:** When a city has turned to idolatry, it must be put under the sacrificial ban and consumed as a *whole burnt offering*. **17:** *The devoted things* (see Lev.27.21 n., 28-29), such as people, cattle, spoil, are holy, for they belong to the LORD's sacrifice (20.10-18).

14.1-15.23: *The conduct of a holy people* (see Lev.19.2 n.). In this section old laws are reinterpreted to enforce the contemporaneity of God's covenant demands. **1:** Prohibition against pagan mourning customs (see Lev.19.28; 21.5). **3-21:** Clean animals that are permitted for food (Lev.11.2-23). **21:** On the first law cited, see Ex.22.31 n. and the regulation for slaughter

dies of itself; you may give it to the alien who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you are a people holy to the LORD your God.

"You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

22 "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed, which comes forth from the field year by year. ²³ And before the LORD your God, in the place which he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herd and flock; that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. ²⁴ And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to bring the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, ²⁵ then you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses, ²⁶ and spend the money for whatever you desire, oxen, or sheep, or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves; and you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. ²⁷ And you shall not forsake the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

28 "At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in the same year, and lay it up within your towns; ²⁹ and the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are

within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

15 "At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release. ² And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, his brother, because the LORD's release has been proclaimed. ³ Of a foreigner you may exact it; but whatever of yours is with your brother your hand shall release. ⁴ But there will be no poor among you (for the LORD will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance to possess), ⁵ if only you will obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all this commandment which I command you this day. ⁶ For the LORD your God will bless you, as he promised you, and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.

7 "If there is among you a poor man, one of your brethren, in any of your towns within your land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, ⁸ but you shall open your hand to him, and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. ⁹ Take heed lest there be a base thought in your heart, and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release is near,' and your eye be hostile to your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and it be sin in you. ¹⁰ You shall

in Dt.12.15-28. On the second law, see Ex.23.18-19 n. **22-29**: Israel is steward of the land which belongs to the LORD; therefore, tithes of produce must be offered annually at the harvest festival (16.9-12). **24-27**: This is a special Deuteronomic provision, arising out of centralization of worship. **27-29**: It was impractical for all Levites to serve at the central sanctuary; therefore special consideration was to be given to the town Levites (see 18.1 n.; 26.12-15). This law modifies the previous provision that an annual tithe be brought to the sanctuary for support of the Levites (Num.18.21-32). **15.1-11**: The year of release. In Ex.23.10-11 the sabbatical year is for the sake of the poor; in Lev.25.1-7 it is a fallow year for the sake of the land. Here the sabbatical year, like the jubilee year (Lev.25.8-55), is a time for remission of debts. **3**: The law does not apply to a *foreigner* who visits for business (v. 6). A *brother* or *neighbor* (v. 2) is a fellow member of the covenant community (see Lev.19.17-18 n.). **11**: If God's will were fully

give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him; because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. ¹¹ For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land.

¹² "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. ¹³ And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed; ¹⁴ you shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your wine press; as the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. ¹⁵ You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. ¹⁶ But if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you, ¹⁷ then you shall take an awl, and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your bondman for ever. And to your bondwoman you shall do likewise. ¹⁸ It shall not seem hard to you, when you let him go free from you; for at half the cost of a hired servant he has served you six years. So the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

¹⁹ "All the firstling males that are born of your herd and flock you shall consecrate to the LORD your God; you

shall do no work with the firstling of your herd, nor shear the firstling of your flock. ²⁰ You shall eat it, you and your household, before the LORD your God year by year at the place which the LORD will choose. ²¹ But if it has any blemish, if it is lame or blind, or has any serious blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. ²² You shall eat it within your towns; the unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as though it were a gazelle or a hart. ²³ Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

16 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover to the LORD your God; for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. ² And you shall offer the passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place which the LORD will choose, to make his name dwell there. ³ You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in hurried flight—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. ⁴ No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days; nor shall any of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. ⁵ You may not offer the passover sacrifice within any of your towns which the LORD your God gives you; ⁶ but at the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it,

obeyed, there would be no poverty (vv. 3–5); but until that time comes *the poor will never cease* (compare Jn.12.8) and the law must remain in force. **12–18:** The law on Hebrew servitude (Ex.21.2–11). **13–15:** An expansion, showing Deuteronomy's ethical fervor (compare Lev. 25.42–43). **17:** Unlike the older law, male and female slaves are put on the same level. **18:** Obeying the law should be easy (compare Jer.34.8–16; Neh.5.5). **19–23:** The old law on the sacrifice of firstlings (see Ex.13.2 n.) is adapted to the requirement of the central sanctuary (12.15–28).

16.1–17: A festal calendar (Ex.23.14–17; 34.18–24; Lev. ch. 23; Num. chs. 28–29). **1–8:** The feast of the passover and unleavened bread (Ex.12.1–27; 13.3–10; 23.15,18; 34.18,25; Lev. 23.5–8; Num.28.16–25). On the relation between these festivals, see Ex.12.14–20 n. Here the passover must be eaten at the central sanctuary, rather than in the towns according to previous custom. **1:** *Abib*, see Ex.13.4 n. **9–12:** The feast of weeks (Ex.23.16; 34.22; Lev.23.15–16; Num.

there you shall offer the passover sacrifice, in the evening at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt. ⁷ And you shall boil it and eat it at the place which the LORD your God will choose; and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. ⁸ For six days you shall eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD your God; you shall do no work on it.

⁹ "You shall count seven weeks; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you first put the sickle to the standing grain. ¹⁰ Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you; ¹¹ and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there. ¹² You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

¹³ "You shall keep the feast of booths seven days, when you make your ingathering from your threshing floor and your wine press; ¹⁴ you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns. ¹⁵ For seven days you shall keep the feast to the LORD your God at the place which the LORD will choose; because

the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

¹⁶ "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place which he will choose: at the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of weeks, and at the feast of booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed; ¹⁷ every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which he has given you.

¹⁸ "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. ¹⁹ You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality; and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. ²⁰ Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God gives you.

²¹ "You shall not plant any tree as an Ashe'rah beside the altar of the LORD your God which you shall make. ²² And you shall not set up a pillar, which the LORD your God hates.

17 "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish, any defect whatever; for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.

² "If there is found among you, within any of your towns which the LORD your God gives you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing his covenant, ³ and has gone and served other gods and worshiped

28.26), a harvest festival held in June (in the New Testament Pentecost, Acts 2.1; 20.16; 1 Cor. 16.8). **13-15:** The feast of booths, in King James Version "tabernacles" (Ex.23.16; 34.22; Lev.23.33-43), the autumn thanksgiving festival. **16-17:** Summary of the pilgrimage festivals (Ex.23.17; 34.23).

16.18-17.20: Laws dealing with justice and religion. **18-20:** The administration of justice. This law reflects a developed society in which responsibility for legal administration was delegated to appointed officials in every town. **18:** *Judges and officers*, 1.13-17. **19:** Ex.23.6-8. **21-22:** Prohibition against Canaanite cultic installations (7.5; see Ex.34.13 n.). **17.1:** An unblemished sacrifice is frequently required in cultic laws (15.21; Lev.22.17-25). **2-7:** The

them, or the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden, ⁴ and it is told you and you hear of it; then you shall inquire diligently, and if it is true and certain that such an abominable thing has been done in Israel, ⁵ then you shall bring forth to your gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death with stones. ⁶ On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses he that is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. ⁷ The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.

⁸ "If any case arises requiring decision between one kind of homicide and another, one kind of legal right and another, or one kind of assault and another, any case within your towns which is too difficult for you, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God will choose, ⁹ and coming to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days, you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you the decision. ¹⁰ Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place which the LORD will choose; and you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you; ¹¹ according to the instructions which they give you, and according to the decision which they pronounce to you, you shall do; you shall not turn

aside from the verdict which they declare to you, either to the right hand or to the left. ¹² The man who acts presumptuously, by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die; so you shall purge the evil from Israel. ¹³ And all the people shall hear, and fear, and not act presumptuously again.

¹⁴ "When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and dwell in it, and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round about me'; ¹⁵ you may indeed set as king over you him whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. ¹⁶ Only he must not multiply horses for himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' ¹⁷ And he shall not multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply for himself silver and gold.

¹⁸ "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, from that which is in charge of the Levitical priests; ¹⁹ and it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing

penalty for idolatry is the same as for enticement to idolatry (ch. 13). **3:** See 4.19. **6:** 19.15; Num.35.30. **8-13:** A supreme tribunal is to adjudicate cases which are too difficult for local judges (16.18). Older legislation had dealt with premeditated and unpremeditated *homicide* (Ex.21.12-14), bodily *assaults* (Ex.21.18-27), and other legal rights, and had provided that cases of doubt should be brought "before God" (Ex.22.9; compare 18.15-16; 33.7). Here the old legal practice is adapted to the law of the central sanctuary. **9:** The *Levitical priests* are those who function in the sanctuary in distinction from town Levites (see 18.1 n.). The *judge*, perhaps the lay chief justice (19.17). One of the priests (see v. 12) was the ecclesiastical chief justice. The tribunal set up by Jehoshaphat was composed of lay and clerical judges (2 Chr.19.5-11). **14-20:** Restrictions upon the Israelite king. **14-15:** From the viewpoint of the Israelite tribal confederacy inaugurated at Shechem (Jos. ch. 24), kingship was alien to the theocracy (Jg.8.22-23). Israel's monarchy represented an attempt to be *like all the nations*, whose kings claimed absolute power (1 Sam.8.4-22). **16-18:** These verses allude to "the ways of the king" (compare 1 Sam.8.10-18) exemplified by Solomon, e.g. his trade in horses (1 Kg.10.26-29). **18:** *This law*, i.e. the law of Deuteronomy, which was kept in the custody of Levitical priests at the sanc-

them; ²⁰ that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left; so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

18 "The Levitical priests, that is, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings by fire to the LORD, and his rightful dues. ² They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them. ³ And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. ⁴ The first fruits of your grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. ⁵ For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand and minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

⁶ "And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he lives—and he may come when he desires—to the place which the LORD will choose, ⁷ then he may minister in the name of the LORD his God, like all his fellow-Levites who stand to minister there before the LORD. ⁸ They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what

he receives from the sale of his patrimony."^m

⁹ "When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. ¹⁰ There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering," any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. ¹² For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD; and because of these abominable practices the LORD your God is driving them out before you. ¹³ You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴ For these nations, which you are about to dispossess, give heed to soothsayers and to diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you so to do.

¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed—¹⁶ just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' ¹⁷ And the LORD said to me, 'They have rightly said all that they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise

^m Heb obscure

ⁿ Heb makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire

tuary (2 Kg.22.8). **19–20:** The king, elected from among his brethren (v. 15), is subject to God's law, like any other citizen. Compare the admonitions to the "prince" (the future kings of the restored line of David) in Ezek.45.7–9.

18.1–22: The proper worship of God. **1–8:** Rights of the Levitical priests. **1:** This law applies to all the tribe of Levi (see Ex.28.1–5 n.), i.e. Levites who officiated at the central sanctuary ("the priests, the sons of Levi," 21.5) and those who functioned as teaching priests in the towns (12.18–19; 14.27,29). Thus Deuteronomy adds a further qualification to priestly legislation which had distinguished only between Aaronic Levites who officiated at the altar and other Levites who were assistants in the sanctuary (see Num. ch. 18). **2:** As a landless tribe, Levites are entitled to support from the sacrifices, i.e. to receive portions of the offerings by fire (see Lev.2.2–3 n.) and of the first fruits. **3–4:** Lev.6.14–18; 7.28–36; Num.18.8–19. **6–8:** Town Levites, whose former role was changed by the centralization of worship, may take part in the services at the central sanctuary. This provision, however, proved impracticable in Josiah's time (2 Kg.23.8–9). **9–14:** Prohibition against pagan superstition and magic. **10:** The meaning of the first practice is uncertain but probably refers to an ordeal of passing through the fire (see note ⁿ) as a test of devotion to Molech, the god of Ammon (12.31). This pagan rite is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament (Lev. 18.21; 2 Kg.16.3; 21.6; Jer.7.31; 19.5; 32.35, etc.). **15–22:** Israelites are not to resort to pagan divination (see the foregoing law), for the LORD

up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

¹⁹ And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

²⁰ But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.' ²¹ And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'— ²² when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him.

19 "When the LORD your God cuts off the nations whose land the LORD your God gives you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, ² you shall set apart three cities for you in the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess. ³ You shall prepare the roads, and divide into three parts the area of the land which the LORD your God gives you as a possession, so that any manslayer can flee to them.

⁴ "This is the provision for the manslayer, who by fleeing there may save his life. If any one kills his neighbor unintentionally without having been at enmity with him in time past— ⁵ as when a man goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—

he may flee to one of these cities and save his life; ⁶ lest the avenger of blood in hot anger pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and wound him mortally, though the man did not deserve to die, since he was not at enmity with his neighbor in time past. ⁷ Therefore I command you, You shall set apart three cities. ⁸ And if the LORD your God enlarges your border, as he has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land which he promised to give to your fathers— ⁹ provided you are careful to keep all this commandment, which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God and by walking ever in his ways—then you shall add three other cities to these three, ¹⁰ lest innocent blood be shed in your land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance, and so the guilt of bloodshed be upon you.

¹¹ "But if any man hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and attacks him, and wounds him mortally so that he dies, and the man flees into one of these cities, ¹² then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die. ¹³ Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood^a from Israel, so that it may be well with you.

¹⁴ "In the inheritance which you will hold in the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess, you shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set.

¹⁵ "A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any

^a Or the blood of the innocent

will raise up a prophetic spokesman to reveal his will. **15:** *Like me*, Moses is regarded as the fountainhead of prophecy and the prototype of the true prophet (34.10–11). **16–17:** 5.23–31. **20–22:** The test of the true prophet (13.1–5) is that his prophecy will be brought to fulfilment according to God's purpose (1 Kg.22.26–28; Jer. ch. 28).

19.1–21: The administration of justice. **1–13:** Cities of refuge are to be established to limit the ancient tribal law of blood revenge (Num. ch. 35). **1–2:** Three cities are to be set apart in Canaan, besides the three in Transjordan (4.41–43). **4–6 (11–13):** Num.35.16–28. **8–10:** Num. ch. 35 and Jos. ch. 20 provide for only six cities. **14:** This verse preserves an ancient law prohibiting the removal of a *landmark*, i.e. property boundary-stone (Is.5.8; Hos.5.10; Pr.22.28). **15–21:** The evidence of witnesses. **15:** 17.6; Num.35.30. **16:** Malicious witnessing is prohibited in the

offense that he has committed; only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained.¹⁶ If a malicious witness rises against any man to accuse him of wrongdoing,¹⁷ then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days;¹⁸ the judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely,¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.²⁰ And the rest shall hear, and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you.²¹ Your eye shall not pity; it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

20 "When you go forth to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.² And when you draw near to the battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the people,³ and shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel, you draw near this day to battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint; do not fear, or tremble, or be in dread of them;⁴ for the LORD your God is he that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.'⁵ Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying, 'What man is there that has built a new house and

has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.⁶ And what man is there that has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed its fruit? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man enjoy its fruit.⁷ And what man is there that has betrothed a wife and has not taken her? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her.'⁸ And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, lest the heart of his fellows melt as his heart.'⁹ And when the officers have made an end of speaking to the people, then commanders shall be appointed at the head of the people.

10 "When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it.¹¹ And if its answer to you is peace and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you.¹² But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it;¹³ and when the LORD your God gives it into your hand you shall put all its males to the sword,¹⁴ but the women and the little ones, the cattle, and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourselves; and you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the LORD your God has given you.¹⁵ Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not cities of the nations here.¹⁶ But in the cities of

Decalogue (Ex.20.16; compare 23.1; Lev.19.16). **17**: The case must come *before the LORD*, i.e. to the supreme tribunal (17.8–13). **21**: The *lex talionis* (see Lev.24.20 n.) is quoted to emphasize that the judges shall determine a penalty appropriate to the crime (see Ex.21.22–25 n.).

20.1–20: Rules for waging holy war. The conception of holy war, rooted in ancient wilderness experiences, provides the basis for the Deuteronomistic understanding of the conquest (2.33–35; 3.3–7, 18–22; 7.1–5; 11.22–25). **1–4**: The premise is that holy war is not a human enterprise, like the wars fought by kings with trained soldiers and impressive *horses and chariots*, but is an action in which the LORD himself is engaged and in which his people respond with fanatical devotion (Jg. ch. 5). **4**: Ex.14.14, 25. **6**: The fruit of a vineyard could not be *enjoyed* (or, put to common use) until the fifth year (Lev.19.23–25). **7**: 24.5 **8**: Holy war is waged with selected warriors. The size of the army is not important, and above all the *fearful* and *fainthearted* must be sifted out (Jg.7.2–3). **10–15**: In war against a non-Palestinian city, booty may be taken (see Num. ch. 31). **15–18**: A Palestinian city, however, must be utterly destroyed, i.e. put under the sacrificial ban, lest the inhabitants corrupt Israel's faith (9.1–6). Since the condemned city is a

these peoples that the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, ¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Per'izzites, the Hivites and the Jeb'usites, as the LORD your God has commanded; ¹⁸ that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices which they have done in the service of their gods, and so to sin against the LORD your God.

19 "When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them; for you may eat of them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field men that they should be besieged by you? ²⁰ Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls.

21 "If in the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess, any one is found slain, lying in the open country, and it is not known who killed him, ² then your elders and your judges shall come forth, and they shall measure the distance to the cities which are around him that is slain; ³ and the elders of the city which is nearest to the slain man shall take a heifer which has never been worked and which has not pulled in the yoke. ⁴ And the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed

nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. ⁵ And the priests the sons of Levi shall come forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to him and to bless in the name of the LORD, and by their word every dispute and every assault shall be settled. ⁶ And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley; ⁷ and they shall testify, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, neither did our eyes see it shed. ⁸ Forgive, O LORD, thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and set not the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of thy people Israel; but let the guilt of blood be forgiven them.' ⁹ So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.

10 "When you go forth to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God gives them into your hands, and you take them captive, ¹¹ and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you have desire for her and would take her for yourself as wife, ¹² then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails. ¹³ And she shall put off her captive's garb, and shall remain in your house and bewail her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her, and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. ¹⁴ Then, if you have no delight in her, you shall let her go where she will; but you shall not sell her for money, you shall not

holy sacrifice to the LORD (compare 13.12-18), no booty can be taken (Jos. ch. 7). 19-20: This stipulation limits wanton destruction of natural resources which, unlike the city and its booty, are gifts from the LORD.

21.1-23.14: Miscellaneous laws. 1-9: A law for the expiation of murder when the slayer is unknown. This ancient rite rests on the belief that bloodshed pollutes the land (v. 8-9; 19.10,13) and that it is the responsibility of the community to seek atonement for the crime. 2: *The elders* (see v. 20 n.) represent the adjacent cities; the *judges* are apparently the Levites from the supreme tribunal of the sanctuary (v. 5; compare 17.8-13). 3-4: The ritual is in some respects similar to that of Num.19.2-10 (compare Lev.14.4-7). In this case, the victim is a substitutionary sacrifice for the guilty party (see Lev.1.4 n.). 5: *The priests, the sons of Levi*, i.e. the Levitical priests from the central sanctuary rather than the town Levites (see 18.1 n.). 6-8: The elders, representing the people, absolve themselves by the symbolic washing of hands and by taking a solemn oath. 10-14: A supplement to the law on holy war against a non-Palestinian

treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her.

15 "If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other disliked, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the disliked, and if the first-born son is hers that is disliked, ¹⁶ then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the first-born in preference to the son of the disliked, who is the first-born, ¹⁷ but he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the disliked, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the first issue of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

18 "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they chastise him, will not give heed to them, ¹⁹ then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, ²⁰ and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' ²¹ Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall purge the evil from your midst; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

22 "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall

bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God; you shall not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.

22 "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and withhold your help^p from them; you shall take them back to your brother. ² And if he is not near you, or if you do not know him, you shall bring it home to your house, and it shall be with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him. ³ And so you shall do with his ass; so you shall do with his garment; so you shall do with any lost thing of your brother's, which he loses and you find; you may not withhold your help. ⁴ You shall not see your brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way, and withhold your help^p from them; you shall help him to lift them up again.

5 "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.

6 "If you chance to come upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; ⁷ you shall let the mother go, but the young you may take to yourself; that it may go well with you, and that you may live long.

8 "When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof,

p Heb *hide yourself*

city (20.10-15) that deals with treatment of female captives (compare Num.31.18). **15-20:** Two old case laws dealing with family affairs. **15-17:** In antiquity it was believed that the right of the first-born was inalienable (Gen.25.29-34). This law puts that right above family rivalry or preference. **18-21:** Like other ancient family laws (Ex.21.15,17; Lev.20.9; compare Dt.27.16), this law is severe. It is designed to protect the family, the basic social unit of Israelite society. **19-20:** The elders sat at the city gate (Ru.4.1-12) where they acted as a judicial council in legal matters. This case is an application of the fifth commandment (Ex.20.12). **22-23:** Hanging (impaling) a criminal on a tree after execution was regarded as the greatest disgrace (Jos.8.29; 10.26-27; 2 Sam.4.12). Only criminals who were regarded as accursed were subjected to this ignominy. **22.1-4:** This law is similar to Ex.23.4-5 but is recast in terms of the Deuteronomic conception of brotherly love. A brother is not necessarily one who is near or even known (v. 2), but is any fellow-Israelite who needs help. **5:** The distinction between the sexes is based on God's creation and should not be violated in any way as, for instance, in the simulated changes of sex in pagan religions. **6:** Man should exercise a reverent concern for God's creatures (compare 20.19-20; 25.4), taking only what he needs for his livelihood. **8:** This safety law was de-

that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if any one fall from it.

9 "You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole yield be forfeited to the sanctuary,⁹ the crop which you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. ¹⁰ You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together.

¹¹ You shall not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together.

12 "You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your cloak with which you cover yourself.

13 "If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and then spurns her, ¹⁴ and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings an evil name upon her, saying, 'I took this woman, and when I came near her, I did not find in her the tokens of virginity,' ¹⁵ then the father of the young woman and her mother shall take and bring out the tokens of her virginity to the elders of the city in the gate; ¹⁶ and the father of the young woman shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man to wife, and he spurns her; ¹⁷ and lo, he has made shameful charges against her, saying, "I did not find in your daughter the tokens of virginity." And yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. ¹⁸ Then the elders of that city shall take the man and whip him; ¹⁹ and they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver, and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. ²⁰ But if the thing is true, that the tokens of virginity were not found in the young woman,

²¹ then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has wrought folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father's house; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.

22 "If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall purge the evil from Israel.

23 "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, ²⁴ then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.

25 "But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. ²⁶ But to the young woman you shall do nothing; in the young woman there is no offense punishable by death, for this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor; ²⁷ because he came upon her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.

28 "If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found, ²⁹ then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his

q Heb become holy

signed for ancient flat-roofed houses. 9-11: The mixing of kinds was believed to be a violation of the differences which God has ordained (v. 5; Lev.19.19). 12: Num.15.37-41. 13-30: Laws governing sexual relations. These laws (also 21.15-21), written in the casuistic (case-law) style of some laws in the Covenant Code (Ex.21.1-22.17; see Ex.21.1 n.), are apparently quoted from an older source, since they show no trace of Deuteronomic style. 13-21: The proof of virginity. 15: On the elders, see 21.19-20 n. 21: On the expression *wrought folly in Israel*, see Gen.34.7 n. 22-27: Adultery, a violation of the seventh commandment, was punishable by death (Lev.18.20; 20.10). Intercourse with a betrothed virgin is considered as adultery because the woman is already, in effect, another man's wife. 28-29: The money payment to be given to the father is

wife, because he has violated her; he may not put her away all his days.

30^r "A man shall not take his father's wife, nor shall he uncover her who is his father's.^s

23 "He whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.

2 "No bastard shall enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

3 "No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the LORD for ever; ⁴ because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Be'or from Pethor of Mesopota'mia, to curse you.

⁵ Nevertheless the LORD your God would not hearken to Balaam; but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you. ⁶ You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days for ever.

7 "You shall not abhor an E'domite, for he is your brother; you shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land. ⁸ The children of the third generation that are born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

9 "When you go forth against your enemies and are in camp, then you

shall keep yourself from every evil thing.

10 "If there is among you any man who is not clean by reason of what chances to him by night, then he shall go outside the camp, he shall not come within the camp; ¹¹ but when evening comes on, he shall bathe himself in water, and when the sun is down, he may come within the camp.

12 "You shall have a place outside the camp and you shall go out to it; ¹³ and you shall have a stick with your weapons; and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up your excrement. ¹⁴ Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to save you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, that he may not see anything indecent among you, and turn away from you.

15 "You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you; ¹⁶ he shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place which he shall choose within one of your towns, where it pleases him best; you shall not oppress him.

17 "There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute of the sons of Israel. ¹⁸ You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog,^t into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow; for both of these

^r Ch 23.1 in Heb

^s Heb uncover his father's skirt

^t Or sodomite

the marriage present (Ex.22.16-17). 30: *Father's wife*, i.e. stepmother (27.20; Lev.18.8; 20.11). 23.1-8: Exclusions from the assembly of the LORD (33.5; Jg.20.2). 1-2: Only those who are unblemished can "present themselves before God" (Jos.24.1). This excludes eunuchs (compare Lev.21.17-23), who in ancient pagan religions were temple priests, and perhaps also excludes children born of incestuous union (Lev.18.6-18). 3-6: 2.9-25. The account in Num. chs. 21-22 does not mention Ammonite hostility against Israel. 7: Gen.25.24-26; 36.1. 9-14: A supplement to the rules for holy war (see ch. 20). Ceremonial cleanness is demanded because *the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp*. 10-11: Lev.15.16-17. 12-14: The camp must be clean not just in the sense of being sanitary but in the sense of being *holy* (see Lev.11.1-47 n.).

23.15-25.19: *Laws dealing with humanitarian and religious obligations*. 23.15-16: In contrast with this humane law, the Code of Hammurabi decreed death as the penalty for sheltering a fugitive slave. 17-18: A strict prohibition against sacred prostitution (see Gen.38.15 n.). *Dog*, a term of reproach for a male cultic prostitute. 19-20: See Ex.22.25 n.; Lev.25.35-38; Dt.15.1-11. Loans within Israel, as distinguished from loans to outsiders, were usually occa-

are an abomination to the LORD your God.

19 "You shall not lend upon interest to your brother, interest on money, interest on victuals, interest on anything that is lent for interest.²⁰ To a foreigner you may lend upon interest, but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest; that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are entering to take possession of it.

21 "When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not be slack to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin in you.²² But if you refrain from vowing, it shall be no sin in you.²³ You shall be careful to perform what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.

24 "When you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your vessel.²⁵ When you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.

24 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,² and if she goes and becomes another man's wife,³ and the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out

of his house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife,⁴ then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.

5 "When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.

6 "No man shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge; for he would be taking a life in pledge.

7 "If a man is found stealing one of his brethren, the people of Israel, and if he treats him as a slave or sells him, then that thief shall die; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.

8 "Take heed, in an attack of leprosy, to be very careful to do according to all that the Levitical priests shall direct you; as I commanded them, so you shall be careful to do.⁹ Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came forth out of Egypt.

10 "When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not go into his house to fetch his pledge.

¹¹ You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you.¹² And if he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge;¹³ when the sun goes down, you shall restore to him the pledge that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.

sioned by financial desperation and therefore became means of oppressing a fellow-Israelite. **21-23:** See Lev. ch. 27. **24-25:** A neighbor's good-will should not be presumed upon to the point of stealing from his harvest. **24.1-4:** An old case law dealing with remarriage after divorce. Initiative for divorce rested with the husband, who, however, could not act without following a legal procedure, including the formulation of a *bill of divorce* (Jer.3.8), stating the grounds. **5:** Another of the rules for holy war (20.1-20; 21.10-14; 23.9-14). **6:** A limitation upon the creditor. Since daily life depends upon bread, the mill cannot be taken as security for a loan (vv. 10-13). **7:** Ex.21.16. **8-9:** See Lev. chs. 13-14. *Remember . . . Miriam* (Num.12.10-15). **10-13:** See Ex.22.26 n. (compare Am.2.8; Pr.22.27). **13:** *Righteousness*, see Gen.6.9 n. **14-15:** Lev.19.13. Israel's humanitarianism is based on the conviction that the LORD is the vindicator

14 "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brethren or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns; ¹⁵ you shall give him his hire on the day he earns it, before the sun goes down (for he is poor, and sets his heart upon it); lest he cry against you to the LORD, and it be sin in you.

16 "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

17 "You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge; ¹⁸ but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

19 "When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

²² You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

25 "If there is a dispute between men, and they come into court,

and the judges decide between them, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty, ² then if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with a number of stripes in proportion to his offense. ³ Forty stripes may be given him, but not more; lest, if one should go on to beat him with more stripes than these, your brother be degraded in your sight.

4 "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.

5 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. ⁶ And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his brother who is dead, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. ⁷ And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' ⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak to him: and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' ⁹ then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' ¹⁰ And the name of his house" shall be called in Israel,

u Heb its name

of the weak and helpless. **16:** This law modifies the ancient belief that guilt affected a whole social group, especially the family (Num.16.31-33; Jos.7.24-25; 2 Sam.21.1-9). Although Deuteronomy does not reject the solidarity of the community in guilt (21.1-9; compare 13.12-18), it puts in the foreground the principle of individual responsibility (Jer.31.29; Ezek. ch. 18). See 2 Kg.14.6 for the application of this law. **17-18:** 15.15. **19-22:** Lev.19.9-10; 23.22. **25.1-3:** An old case law which imposes judicial restrictions on corporal punishment. *The judges*, 16.18. **4:** A law in the humane spirit of 22.6-7. **5-10:** An old case law on levirate marriage (see Gen. 38.8 n.). **6:** Since a man's name, according to ancient thought, was the bearer of his person, a father lived on in his son (Gen.48.15-16). **7:** As in the case of Tamar (Gen. ch. 38), the wife had the obligation to see that *the duty of a husband's brother* (or levir) was performed. **9-10:** For the symbolic action of removing the sandal, in a more complicated levirate marriage

The house of him that had his sandal pulled off.

11 "When men fight with one another, and the wife of the one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of him who is beating him, and puts out her hand and seizes him by the private parts, ¹² then you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall have no pity.

13 "You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. ¹⁴ You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small. ¹⁵ A full and just weight you shall have, a full and just measure you shall have; that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. ¹⁶ For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the LORD your God.

17 "Remember what Am'alek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he attacked you on the way, when you were faint and weary, and cut off at your rear all who lagged behind you; and he did not fear God. ¹⁹ Therefore when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies round about, in the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the remembrance of Am'alek from under heaven; you shall not forget.

26 "When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance, and have taken possession of it, and live in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your

God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ³ And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'I declare this day to the LORD your God that I have come into the land which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.' ⁴ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

5 "And you shall make response before the LORD your God, 'A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶ And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. ⁷ Then we cried to the LORD the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression; ⁸ and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; ⁹ and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O LORD, hast given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God; ¹¹ and you shall rejoice in all the good which the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

12 "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the

situation, see Ru.4.7 n. **11-12:** This exceptionally severe law is based on the belief that the sexual organ, the spring of fertility, should not be blemished (23.1). **13-16:** Compare Lev.19.35-36. **17-19:** Holy war against Amalek (Ex.17.8-15).

26.1-19: Concluding liturgies and exhortation. This chapter anticipates the climax and conclusion of Moses' main address (ch. 28). **1-11:** A liturgy for the presentation of the first fruits at the central sanctuary. **2-3:** The occasion is the harvest pilgrimage festival, the feast of weeks (16.9-12), when the worshiper gives thanks for the LORD's gift of the land and for his bounteous blessing. **5-10:** An ancient creedal recital of the LORD's mighty acts as manifested primarily in the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan. **5:** *A wandering Aramean*, a reference to Jacob's semi-nomadic life. **12-15:** A liturgy for the year of tithing. The worshiper testifies that he has set aside the sacred portion (or tithe) in his home town according to the ordinance of 14.28-29.

third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled,¹³ then you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them;¹⁴ I have not eaten of the tithe while I was mourning, or removed any of it while I was unclean, or offered any of it to the dead; I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, I have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.¹⁵ Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel and the ground which thou hast given us, as thou didst swear to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

16 "This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances; you shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul.¹⁷ You have declared this day concerning the LORD that he is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his ordinances, and will obey his voice;¹⁸ and the LORD has declared this day concerning you that you are a people for his own possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his

commandments,¹⁹ that he will set you high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honor, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he has spoken."

27 Now Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, "Keep all the commandment which I command you this day.² And on the day you pass over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall set up large stones, and plaster them with plaster;³ and you shall write upon them all the words of this law, when you pass over to enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you.⁴ And when you have passed over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, concerning which I command you this day, on Mount Ebal, and you shall plaster them with plaster.⁵ And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall lift up no iron tool upon them.⁶ You shall build an altar to the LORD your God of unhewn stones; and you shall offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God;⁷ and you shall sacrifice peace offerings, and shall eat there; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God.⁸ And you shall write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly."

9 And Moses and the Levitical

v Heb whole

13: *Before the LORD*, at the central sanctuary. 14: He confesses that he has not defiled the holy offering by touching it in a state of ritual uncleanness while mourning (Num.19.11-16) or by bringing it to a tomb as a funerary offering. 16-19: This exhortation concludes the exposition of the *statutes* and *ordinances* contained in chs. 12-26. The language here may echo a ceremony of covenant renewal at the central sanctuary when the law was publicly read and the covenant relation between the LORD and Israel was renewed (see 31.10-11 n.). *This day* the LORD has stated his covenant demands (v. 16), *this day* the people have declared that he alone is their God (v. 17), and *this day* the LORD has reaffirmed that Israel is his chosen people (vv. 18-19).

27.1-26: *The Shechem ceremony*. A cultic ceremony is to be inaugurated which will solemnly dramatize Israel's covenant responsibilities (11.26-32). 1: Here Moses is referred to in the third person. This chapter stands independently and interrupts Moses' address (chs. 5-26 and ch. 28). 4: *Mount Ebal* and Mount Gerizim (vv. 12,13) overlook the city of Shechem (see Gen.12.6 n.). Contrary to the law of ch. 12, an altar of unhewn stones (Ex.20.25) is to be set up at a place other than the central sanctuary, an evidence of the antiquity and independence of this tradition. 7: *Eat . . . rejoice*, a reference to the communion meal in connection with the *peace offer-*

priests said to all Israel, "Keep silence and hear, O Israel: this day you have become the people of the LORD your God. ¹⁰ You shall therefore obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you this day."

¹¹ And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, ¹² "When you have passed over the Jordan, these shall stand upon Mount Ger'izim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Is'sachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. ¹³ And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zeb'ulun, Dan, and Naph'tali. ¹⁴ And the Levites shall declare to all the men of Israel with a loud voice:

¹⁵ "'Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to the LORD, a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'

¹⁶ "'Cursed be he who dishonors his father or his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

¹⁷ "'Cursed be he who removes his neighbor's landmark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

¹⁸ "'Cursed be he who misleads a blind man on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

¹⁹ "'Cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

²⁰ "'Cursed be he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncov-

ered her who is his father's.'" And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

²¹ "'Cursed be he who lies with any kind of beast.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

²² "'Cursed be he who lies with his sister, whether the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

²³ "'Cursed be he who lies with his mother-in-law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

²⁴ "'Cursed be he who slays his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

²⁵ "'Cursed be he who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

²⁶ "'Cursed be he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

28 "And if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God. ³ Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. ⁴ Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock. ⁵ Blessed shall be your basket and your knead-

w Heb uncovered his father's skirt

ings (see Lev. ch. 3). **11-13:** These verses deal with an ancient ceremony at Shechem, instituted at the command of Moses according to Jos.8.30-35. The antiquity of the tribal list is seen in the facts that Levi is listed as a tribe (Gen.49.5-7) and that the division of the house of Joseph into Manasseh and Ephraim has not yet occurred (Gen.49.22-26). **15-26:** The ritual of the blessing (v. 12; 28.3-6) is not preserved in this fragmentary record; only the ceremony of the curse is given (v. 13). The presiding Levites read a curse and in response the congregation says *Amen*, i.e. in full knowledge of the divine disapproval expressed in the twelve curses (corresponding to the twelve tribes), the people solemnly take upon themselves the covenant responsibilities (Jer.11.3). The twelve curses are very old laws which, with the exception of the last two, are paralleled in other codes of the Pentateuch.

28.1-68: The conclusion of Moses' second address. Moses calls the people to decision by announcing the blessings which accompany obedience and the curses which fall upon disobedience. **1:** Continuation from 26.16-19. **3-6:** These six blessings, formulated in short, emphatic style, were perhaps part of the old covenant ceremony preserved in fragmentary form in 27.11-

ing-trough. ⁶ Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

⁷ "The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways. ⁸ The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns, and in all that you undertake; and he will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you. ⁹ The LORD will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and walk in his ways.

¹⁰ And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of you. ¹¹ And the LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground, within the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

¹² The LORD will open to you his good treasury the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. ¹³ And the LORD will make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall tend upward only, and not downward; if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day, being careful to do them, ¹⁴ and if you do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

¹⁵ "But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. ¹⁶ Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed

shall you be in the field. ¹⁷ Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading-trough. ¹⁸ Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock. ¹⁹ Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

²⁰ "The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and frustration, in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly, on account of the evil of your doings, because you have forsaken me. ²¹ The LORD will make the pestilence cleave to you until he has consumed you off the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ²² The LORD will smite you with consumption, and with fever, inflammation, and fiery heat, and with drought,* and with blasting, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. ²³ And the heavens over your head shall be brass, and the earth under you shall be iron. ²⁴ The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down upon you until you are destroyed.

²⁵ "The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁶ And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth; and there shall be no one to frighten them away. ²⁷ The LORD will smite you with the boils of Egypt, and with the ulcers and the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed. ²⁸ The LORD will smite you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind; ²⁹ and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways; and you

x Another reading is *sword*

26. 7-14: A commentary on the meaning of the blessings. 16-19: These six curses, parallel to the six blessings, likewise echo the old Shechem ceremony. 20-46: A commentary on the curses. Perhaps it was the reading of this chapter which had a profound effect upon King Josiah (2 Kg.22.11-13). 27: A reference to the Egyptian plagues. 30: 20.5-7. 36-37: Conquest by a

shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to help you. ³⁰ You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, and you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, and you shall not use the fruit of it. ³¹ Your ox shall be slain before your eyes, and you shall not eat of it; your ass shall be violently taken away before your face, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and there shall be no one to help you. ³² Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes look on and fail with longing for them all the day; and it shall not be in the power of your hand to prevent it. ³³ A nation which you have not known shall eat up the fruit of your ground and of all your labors; and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually; ³⁴ so that you shall be driven mad by the sight which your eyes shall see. ³⁵ The LORD will smite you on the knees and on the legs with grievous boils of which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.

³⁶ "The LORD will bring you, and your king whom you set over you, to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone. ³⁷ And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples where the LORD will lead you away. ³⁸ You shall carry much seed into the field, and shall gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. ³⁹ You shall plant vineyards and dress them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worm shall eat them. ⁴⁰ You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. ⁴¹ You shall beget sons and

daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. ⁴² All your trees and the fruit of your ground the locust shall possess. ⁴³ The sojourner who is among you shall mount above you higher and higher; and you shall come down lower and lower. ⁴⁴ He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. ⁴⁵ All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you, till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded you. ⁴⁶ They shall be upon you as a sign and a wonder, and upon your descendants for ever.

⁴⁷ "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things, ⁴⁸ therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he will put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until he has destroyed you. ⁴⁹ The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you do not understand, ⁵⁰ a nation of stern countenance, who shall not regard the person of the old or show favor to the young, ⁵¹ and shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; who also shall not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your cattle or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish. ⁵² They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the LORD your God has given you. ⁵³ And you shall eat

strange nation was experienced in 721 B.C. when the Assyrians destroyed the Northern Kingdom and deported its population into *captivity* (v. 41). 47-68: A further expansion of the meaning of the curses. These verses apparently reflect the tragedy which befell Judah when the Babylonians laid siege to fortified cities (v. 52), conquered Jerusalem, and between 597 and 587 B.C.

the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you.

⁵⁴ The man who is the most tender and delicately bred among you will grudge food to his brother, to the wife of his bosom, and to the last of the children who remain to him; ⁵⁵ so that he will not give to any of them any of the flesh of his children whom he is eating, because he has nothing left him, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in all your towns. ⁵⁶ The most tender and delicately bred woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground because she is so delicate and tender, will grudge to the husband of her bosom, to her son and to her daughter, ⁵⁷ her after-birth that comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears, because she will eat them secretly, for want of all things, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in your towns.

58 "If you are not careful to do all the words of this law which are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awful name, the LORD your God, ⁵⁹ then the LORD will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting. ⁶⁰ And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, which you were afraid of; and they shall cleave to you. ⁶¹ Every sickness also, and every affliction which is not recorded in the book of this law, the LORD will bring upon you, until you are destroyed. ⁶² Whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude, you shall be left few in number; because you did not obey the voice

of the LORD your God. ⁶³ And as the LORD took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the LORD will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you; and you shall be plucked off the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶⁴ And the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. ⁶⁵ And among these nations you shall find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of your foot; but the LORD will give you there a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and a languishing soul; ⁶⁶ your life shall hang in doubt before you; night and day you shall be in dread, and have no assurance of your life. ⁶⁷ In the morning you shall say, 'Would it were evening!' and at evening you shall say, 'Would it were morning!' because of the dread which your heart shall fear, and the sights which your eyes shall see. ⁶⁸ And the LORD will bring you back in ships to Egypt, a journey which I promised that you should never make again; and there you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no man will buy you."

29 These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he had made with them at Horeb.

2^c And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, ³ the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders; ⁴ but to this day the LORD has not given

y Ch 28.69 in Heb z Ch 29.1 in Heb

led many people into captivity. 53-57: Lev.26.29. 68: The disaster is interpreted as a return to Egyptian bondage, more pathetic than the former bondage.

29.1-30.20: Moses' third address. In this supplement Moses again exhorts Israel to renew the covenant and warns of the disastrous consequences of disobedience. 1: *The covenant* in Moab is not the original covenant but a renewal of it. 2-9: As in the other addresses, the covenant is

you a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear.⁵ I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes have not worn out upon you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet;⁶ you have not eaten bread, and you have not drunk wine or strong drink; that you may know that I am the LORD your God.⁷ And when you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out against us to battle, but we defeated them;⁸ we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manas'sites.⁹ Therefore be careful to do the words of this covenant, that you may prosper^a in all that you do.

10 "You stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; the heads of your tribes,^b your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel,¹¹ your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, both he who hews your wood and he who draws your water,¹² that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the LORD your God, which the LORD your God makes with you this day;¹³ that he may establish you this day as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.¹⁴ Nor is it with you only that I make this sworn covenant,¹⁵ but with him who is not here with us this day as well as with him who stands here with us this day before the LORD our God.

16 "You know how we dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed;¹⁷ and you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, which were among them.¹⁸ Beware lest there be among you a man

or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away this day from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations; lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,¹⁹ one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This would lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.²⁰ The LORD would not pardon him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy would smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book would settle upon him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven.²¹ And the LORD would single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this book of the law.²² And the generation to come, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the LORD has made it sick—²³ the whole land brimstone and salt, and a burnt-out waste, unsown, and growing nothing, where no grass can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomor'rah, Admah and Zeboi'im, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and wrath—²⁴ yea, all the nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land? What means the heat of this great anger?'²⁵ Then men would say, 'It is because they forsook the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt,²⁶ and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them;²⁷ therefore the

^a Or deal wisely

^b Gk Syr: Heb *your heads, your tribes*

based on a recital of the LORD's mighty acts (compare Ex.19.3-6; Jos.24.2-13). 10-14: See 26.16-19 n. 14: On the contemporaneity of the covenant, see 5.2-3 n. 18-19: The community is responsible for rooting out the infectious poison of idolatry lest the *moist* (fertile and wholesome) people be swept away with the *dry* (ch. 13). 20: *Jealousy*, see Ex.34.14 n. 23: See Gen. ch.

anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book; ²⁸ and the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as at this day.'

29 'The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

30 'And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, ² and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you this day, with all your heart and with all your soul; ³ then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes, and have compassion upon you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴ If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will fetch you; ⁵ and the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, that you may possess it; and he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. ⁶ And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. ⁷ And the LORD your God will put all these curses upon your foes and enemies who persecuted you. ⁸ And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD, and keep all his commandments which

I command you this day. ⁹ The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground; for the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, ¹⁰ if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

11 'For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹⁴ But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

15 'See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you this day,

c Gk: Heb lacks *If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God*

19. 29: *The secret things* refer to the divine wisdom beyond man's ken; *the revealed things* are the teachings set forth in Deuteronomy. 30.1-10: This passage presupposes that Israel is already in exile and anticipates the time when the LORD will restore his people. 2: *Return to the LORD*, that is, repent—an act which involves turning away from unworthy loyalties and turning the heart (see 6.4-5 n.) to God (v. 10). 6: God himself will work the inner change which makes it possible to fulfil the law of love. On circumcision of the heart, see 10.16 n. 9: 28.3-6. 11-14: The covenant demand is not beyond man's reach or understanding but has been graciously revealed (29.29) and, in the service of covenant renewal (29.1), *the word is very near you*. 15-20: The two ways, between which Israel must decide. Such a challenge formed a climactic moment

that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

31 So Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel. ² And he said to them, "I am a hundred and twenty years old this day; I am no longer able to go out and come in. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not go over this Jordan.' ³ The LORD your God himself will go over before you; he will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them; and Joshua will go over at your head, as the LORD has spoken. ⁴ And the LORD will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. ⁵ And the LORD will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to all the commandment which I have commanded you. ⁶ Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the LORD your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you."

⁷ Then Moses summoned Joshua, and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall go with this people into

the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them; and you shall put them in possession of it. ⁸ It is the LORD who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed."

⁹ And Moses wrote this law, and gave it to the priests the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time of the year of release, at the feast of booths, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, ¹³ and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess."

¹⁴ And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may commission him." And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. ¹⁵ And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood by the door of the tent.

¹⁶ And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to sleep with your fathers; then this people will rise and play the harlot after the strange

in ancient ceremonies of covenant renewal (26.16–27.26; Jos.24.14–15). **20:** *Life* is not the mere extension of days. It is loving, obeying, and cleaving to the LORD instead of pursuing the ways of idolatry.

31.1–29: Concluding events of Moses' life. **1–8:** Moses' final charge to Joshua and the people. **2–3:** Compare 1.37–38; 3.18–28. **7–8:** Jos.1.1–9. **9–13:** A covenant ceremony, to be held every seven years, is instituted. **9:** The belief is expressed that the whole Deuteronomic law was written by Moses. **10–11:** Every *year of release* or sabbatical year (15.1–11) the Deuteronomic law is to be read at the central sanctuary during the feast of booths (16.13–16). On this occasion a ceremony of covenant renewal is presumably to take place. **14–23:** The commissioning of Joshua (Num.27.12–23). **14–15:** These verses connect with the old literary tradition in Ex. 33.7–11. **16–22:** Moses is commanded to write a song which will confront the people as a

gods of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake me and break my covenant which I have made with them. ¹⁷ Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured; and many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' ¹⁸ And I will surely hide my face in that day on account of all the evil which they have done, because they have turned to other gods. ¹⁹ Now therefore write this song, and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. ²⁰ For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. ²¹ And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their descendants); for I know the purposes which they are already forming, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give." ²² So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the people of Israel.

²³ And the LORD commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore to give them: I will be with you."

²⁴ When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book, to the very end, ²⁵ Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the

covenant of the LORD, ²⁶ "Take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you. ²⁷ For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are; behold, while I am yet alive with you, today you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more after my death! ²⁸ Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁹ For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands."

³⁰ Then Moses spoke the words of this song until they were finished, in the ears of all the assembly of Israel:

32 "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak;

and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

² May my teaching drop as the rain,
my speech distil as the dew,
as the gentle rain upon the tender grass,
and as the showers upon the herb.

³ For I will proclaim the name of the LORD.
Ascribe greatness to our God!

⁴ "The Rock, his work is perfect;
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and right is he.

⁵ They have dealt corruptly with him,
they are no longer his children
because of their blemish;

witness when they turn to other gods. The song is found in ch. 32. **23**: Continuation of vv. 14-15. **24-27**: These verses resume the thought of vv. 9-13. **26**: *This book of the law*, i.e. Deuteronomy. **28-29**: *These words*, probably a reference to the following Song of Moses, not to the book of law.

31.30-32.47: The Song of Moses. This psalm, which contrasts God's faithfulness to Israel's faithlessness, is an interpretation of Mosaic faith rather than a composition of Moses himself. Probably it dates from a time during the monarchy. **1-3**: Introductory appeal (compare Is.1.2; Mic.1.2). **4-6**: The integrity of God's ways is contrasted to the perversity of Israel. *Rock*, an

- they are a perverse and crooked generation.
- ⁶ Do you thus requite the LORD,
you foolish and senseless people?
Is not he your father, who created you,
who made you and established you?
- ⁷ Remember the days of old,
consider the years of many generations;
ask your father, and he will show you;
your elders, and they will tell you.
- ⁸ When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
when he separated the sons of men,
he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.^d
- ⁹ For the LORD's portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted heritage.
- ¹⁰ "He found him in a desert land,
and in the howling waste of the wilderness;
he encircled him, he cared for him,
he kept him as the apple of his eye.
- ¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
that flutters over its young,
spreading out its wings, catching them,
bearing them on its pinions,
- ¹² the LORD alone did lead him,
and there was no foreign god with him.
- ¹³ He made him ride on the high places of the earth,
and he ate the produce of the field;
and he made him suck honey out of the rock,
- and oil out of the flinty rock.
- ¹⁴ Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock,
with fat of lambs and rams,
herds of Bashan and goats,
with the finest of the wheat—
and of the blood of the grape you drank wine.
- ¹⁵ "But Jesh'urun waxed fat, and kicked;
you waxed fat, you grew thick,
you became sleek;
then he forsook God who made him,
and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.
- ¹⁶ They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods;
with abominable practices they provoked him to anger.
- ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons which were no gods,
to gods they had never known,
to new gods that had come in of late,
whom your fathers had never dreaded.
- ¹⁸ You were unmindful of the Rock that begot^e you,
and you forgot the God who gave you birth.
- ¹⁹ "The LORD saw it, and spurned them,
because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.
- ²⁰ And he said, 'I will hide my face from them,
I will see what their end will be,
for they are a perverse generation,
children in whom is no faithfulness.
- ²¹ They have stirred me to jealousy with what is no god;

^d Compare Gk: Heb *Israel* ^e Or *bore*

ancient epithet for God (vv. 15,18), suggesting stability and dependability. 7-14: A recital of the LORD's saving deeds in *the days of old*. 8: *The sons of God*, the divine beings who belong to the heavenly court (see Gen.1.26 n.). To these heavenly beings the LORD delegated authority to govern other nations, but he chose Israel for himself. 11-12: Ex.19.4. 15-18: Israel's rebellious forgetfulness of the LORD. 15: Like a well-fed animal, Israel rebelled against his master. *Jeshurun* ("the Upright One"), a term applied ironically to Israel (33.5,26). 16: *Jealousy*, see Ex.34.14 n. 17: *Demons*, a reference to the gods of Canaan (Ps.106.37-38), who are actually

- they have provoked me with
their idols.
So I will stir them to jealousy with
those who are no people;
I will provoke them with a
foolish nation.
- 22 For a fire is kindled by my anger,
and it burns to the depths of
Sheol,
devours the earth and its increase,
and sets on fire the foundations
of the mountains.
- 23 "And I will heap evils upon them;
I will spend my arrows upon
them;
24 they shall be wasted with hunger,
and devoured with burning heat
and poisonous pestilence;
and I will send the teeth of beasts
against them,
with venom of crawling things
of the dust.
- 25 In the open the sword shall bereave,
and in the chambers shall be
terror,
destroying both young man and
virgin,
the sucking child with the man
of gray hairs.
- 26 I would have said, "I will scatter
them afar,
I will make the remembrance of
them cease from among men,"
- 27 had I not feared provocation by the
enemy,
lest their adversaries should
judge amiss,
lest they should say, "Our hand is
triumphant,
the LORD has not wrought all
this."
- 28 "For they are a nation void of
counsel,
and there is no understanding in
them.
- 29 If they were wise, they would
understand this,
they would discern their latter
end!
- 30 How should one chase a thousand,
and two put ten thousand to
flight,
unless their Rock had sold them,
and the LORD had given them up?
- 31 For their rock is not as our Rock,
even our enemies themselves
being judges.
- 32 For their vine comes from the vine
of Sodom,
and from the fields of
Gomor'rah;
their grapes are grapes of poison,
their clusters are bitter;
- 33 their wine is the poison of serpents,
and the cruel venom of asps.
- 34 "Is not this laid up in store with me,
sealed up in my treasuries?
- 35 Vengeance is mine, and
recompense,
for the time when their foot shall
slip;
for the day of their calamity is at
hand,
and their doom comes swiftly.
- 36 For the LORD will vindicate his
people
and have compassion on his
servants,
when he sees that their power is
gone,
and there is none remaining, bond
or free.

no gods. 19-27: The LORD's righteous indignation. 21: *No people*, a word-play on *no god*. 22: The poet envisions the foundations of the earth crumbling under the fire of divine wrath. According to ancient belief, the *foundations of the mountains* which supported the firmament were sunk in the subterranean ocean (Ps.46.2-3). *Sheol*, see Gen.37.35 n. 28-33: The corruption of the nations. In vv. 28-29 *they* apparently refers to Israel and in vv. 31-33 *their* refers to the enemies. Israel cannot perceive that disaster has befallen them because *their Rock* abandoned them. *The rock* (god) of the enemies (vv. 37-38), however, cannot be compared to Israel's God. 32: *Their vine* (i.e. of the enemies) is likened to the proverbial fruit of Sodom and Gomorrah: outwardly beautiful but inwardly worthless. 34-43: Because of the corruption of the nations the LORD will finally overthrow the wicked nations and vindicate his people. 34: *This*, the nations' corruption (vv. 32-33). 35: *Vengeance* means both judgment upon the oppressor and

³⁷ Then he will say, 'Where are their
gods,
the rock in which they took
refuge,

³⁸ who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
and drank the wine of their drink
offering?

Let them rise up and help you,
let them be your protection!

³⁹ "See now that I, even I, am he,
and there is no god beside me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver
out of my hand.

⁴⁰ For I lift up my hand to heaven,
and swear, As I live for ever,

⁴¹ if I whet my glittering sword,^f
and my hand takes hold on
judgment,

I will take vengeance on my
adversaries,
and will requite those who hate
me.

⁴² I will make my arrows drunk with
blood,
and my sword shall devour flesh—
with the blood of the slain and the
captives,
from the long-haired heads of the
enemy.'

⁴³ "Praise his people, O you nations;
for he avenges the blood of his
servants,
and takes vengeance on his
adversaries,
and makes expiation for the land
of his people."^g

⁴⁴ Moses came and recited all the
words of this song in the hearing of the

people, he and Joshua^h the son of
Nun. ⁴⁵ And when Moses had fin-
ished speaking all these words to all
Israel, ⁴⁶ he said to them, "Lay to
heart all the words which I enjoin upon
you this day, that you may command
them to your children, that they may
be careful to do all the words of this
law. ⁴⁷ For it is no trifle for you, but
it is your life, and thereby you shall
live long in the land which you are
going over the Jordan to possess."

⁴⁸ And the LORD said to Moses that
very day, ⁴⁹ "Ascend this mountain of
the Ab'arim, Mount Nebo, which is in
the land of Moab, opposite Jericho; and
view the land of Canaan, which I
give to the people of Israel for a posses-
sion; ⁵⁰ and die on the mountain
which you ascend, and be gathered to
your people, as Aaron your brother
died in Mount Hor and was gathered
to his people; ⁵¹ because you broke
faith with me in the midst of the people
of Israel at the waters of Mer'i-bath-
ka'desh, in the wilderness of Zin; be-
cause you did not revere me as holy
in the midst of the people of Israel.
⁵² For you shall see the land before
you; but you shall not go there, into
the land which I give to the people of
Israel."

33 This is the blessing with which
Moses the man of God blessed
the children of Israel before his death.

² He said,

"The LORD came from Sinai,
and dawned from Se'ir upon us;ⁱ
he shone forth from Mount Paran,

^f Heb the lightning of my sword
^g Gk Vg: Heb his land his people
^h Gk Syr Vg: Heb Hoshea
ⁱ Gk Syr Vg: Heb them

vindication of the oppressed (v. 36). *Their foot . . . their doom*, the reference is to Israel's enemies.
37–38: See v. 17 n. **39:** *Kill . . . make alive*, i.e. God is sovereign in all things according to the
poet's faith (Ex.4.11 n.; Is.45.5–7). **43:** *Makes expiation*, cleanses or purges the land and its
people of guilt. **44–47:** The conclusion of 31.16–29. **48–52:** Moses is commanded to ascend
Mount Nebo (Num.20.10–13; 27.12–14).

33.1–29: The blessing of Moses. Before going to his death, Moses gives his final blessing to
the Israelite tribes (see introduction to the blessing of Jacob, Gen. ch. 49). **1:** On death-bed
blessings, see Gen.27.4 n. This poem assumes that the tribes are already settled in Palestine
rather than looking forward to the settlement. In its present form it probably comes from the
early period of the monarchy, though it may reflect slightly earlier tribal circumstances. Simeon,
for example, is not mentioned, perhaps because the tribe had already disappeared (Gen.49.5–7).

- he came from the ten thousands of
holy ones,
with flaming fire^j at his right
hand.
- ³ Yea, he loved his people;^k
all those consecrated to him were
in his^x hand;
so they followed^d in thy steps,
receiving direction from thee,
- ⁴ when Moses commanded us a law,
as a possession for the assembly
of Jacob.
- ⁵ Thus the LORD became king in
Jesh'urun,
when the heads of the people were
gathered,
all the tribes of Israel together.
- ⁶ "Let Reuben live, and not die,
nor let his men be few."
- ⁷ And this he said of Judah:
"Hear, O LORD, the voice of Judah,
and bring him in to his people.
With thy hands contend^d for him,
and be a help against his
adversaries."
- ⁸ And of Levi he said,
"Give to Levi^m thy Thummim,
and thy Urim to thy godly one,
whom thou didst test at Massah,
with whom thou didst strive at the
waters of Mer'ibah;
⁹ who said of his father and mother,
'I regard them not';
he disowned his brothers,
and ignored his children.
For they observed thy word,
and kept thy covenant.
- ¹⁰ They shall teach Jacob thy
ordinances,
and Israel thy law;
they shall put incense before thee,
and whole burnt offering upon thy
altar.
- ¹¹ Bless, O LORD, his substance,
and accept the work of his hands;
crush the loins of his adversaries,
of those that hate him, that they
rise not again."
- ¹² Of Benjamin he said,
"The beloved of the LORD,
he dwells in safety by him;
he encompasses him all the day long,
and makes his dwelling between
his shoulders."
- ¹³ And of Joseph he said,
"Blessed by the LORD be his land,
with the choicest gifts of heaven
above,"
and of the deep that couches
beneath,
¹⁴ with the choicest fruits of the sun,
and the rich yield of the months,
¹⁵ with the finest produce of the ancient
mountains,
and the abundance of the
everlasting hills,
¹⁶ with the best gifts of the earth and
its fulness,
and the favor of him that dwelt
in the bush.
- Let these come upon the head of
Joseph,
and upon the crown of the head
of him that is prince among his
brothers.

^j The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^k Gk: Heb *peoples* ^x Heb *thy*

^l Cn: Heb *with his hands* he contended

^m Gk: Heb *lacks Give to Levi*

ⁿ Two Heb Mss and Tg: Heb *with the dew*

2-5: Introductory praise of the LORD, who revealed himself *from Sinai* and formed Israel as his people. 5: *Jeshurun*, see 32.15 n. The LORD was proclaimed king in the *assembly*, the gathering of the tribes and the chiefs of the tribal confederacy (Jos.24.1; Jg.20.2). 6: Reuben, who once had the leadership of the first-born (see Gen.49.3-4 n.), is apparently threatened with extinction, owing to military pressures in Transjordan. 7: It is desired that Judah, in sore trouble because of an adversary (perhaps the Philistines), should be helped by other tribes. 8-11: Levi, once a war-like tribe (Gen.49.5-7), is to receive the prerogatives of priesthood, namely teaching and officiating at the altar. 8: *Urim* and *Thummim*, see Ex.28.15-30 n. Apparently the Levitical priesthood originated at Kadesh, i.e. *Massah* and *Meribah* (Ex.17.1-7; Num.20.2-13). 9: On Levi's zealous covenant loyalty see Ex.32.25-29. 13-17: The wish is that *Joseph* may be blessed with the bounties of nature and with invincible military strength (compare Gen.49.25-26). 16: *Dwelt in the bush* is rendered by some, "tented on Sinai"—a reference to the LORD's revela-

¹⁷ His firstling bull has majesty,
and his horns are the horns of a
wild ox;
with them he shall push the peoples,
all of them, to the ends of the
earth;
such are the ten thousands of
E'phraim,
and such are the thousands of
Manas'seh."

¹⁸ And of Zeb'ulun he said,
"Rejoice, Zeb'ulun, in your going
out;

and Is'sachar, in your tents.

¹⁹ They shall call peoples to their
mountain;
there they offer right sacrifices;
for they suck the affluence of the
seas
and the hidden treasures of the
sand."

²⁰ And of Gad he said,
"Blessed be he who enlarges Gad!
Gad couches like a lion,
he tears the arm, and the crown
of the head.

²¹ He chose the best of the land for
himself,
for there a commander's portion
was reserved;
and he came to the heads of the
people,
with Israel he executed the
commands
and just decrees of the LORD."

²² And of Dan he said,
"Dan is a lion's whelp,
that leaps forth from Bashan."

²³ And of Naph'tali he said,

"O Naph'tali, satisfied with favor,
and full of the blessing of the
LORD,
possess the lake and the south."

²⁴ And of Asher he said,
"Blessed above sons be Asher;
let him be the favorite of his
brothers,
and let him dip his foot in oil.

²⁵ Your bars shall be iron and bronze;
and as your days, so shall your
strength be.

²⁶ "There is none like God, O
Jesh'urun,
who rides through the heavens to
your help,
and in his majesty through the
skies.

²⁷ The eternal God is your dwelling
place,
and underneath are the everlasting
arms.

And he thrust out the enemy before
you,
and said, Destroy.

²⁸ So Israel dwelt in safety,
the fountain of Jacob alone,
in a land of grain and wine;
yea, his heavens drop down dew.

²⁹ Happy are you, O Israel! Who is
like you,
a people saved by the LORD,
the shield of your help,
and the sword of your triumph!
Your enemies shall come fawning
to you;
and you shall tread upon their
high places."

34 And Moses went up from the
plains of Moab to Mount Nebo,
to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite

tion there (Ex.3.1-6). *Prince*, at the time of the poem Joseph enjoyed even greater prestige than Judah (v. 7). ¹⁷: *Ephraim and Manasseh*, the two tribes that composed "the house of Joseph" (see Gen.48.13-14 n.). ¹⁸⁻¹⁹: *Zebulun and Issachar* will enjoy great affluence owing to the resources of the Mediterranean and Sea of Galilee (Gen.49.13). ²⁰⁻²¹: *Gad* occupied the best tableland in Transjordan but aided the other tribes in the conquest of Canaan (see Num. ch. 32). ²²: *Dan*, vigorous as a *lion's whelp*, has already migrated from its former position north of Judah to the base of Mount Hermon (Jg. ch. 18). ²³: *Naphthali* is to possess *the lake* (Sea of Galilee). ²⁴⁻²⁵: *Asher*, located below Phoenicia, is to be strong and prosperous. ²⁶⁻²⁹: An ascription of praise to the LORD who has given Israel victory and security in the bounteous land. ²⁶: *Jeshurun*, 32.15. ²⁷: God is a place of refuge and, like a parent, his *everlasting arms* support his children.

Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, ² all Naph'tali, the land of E'phraim and Manas'seh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, ³ the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zo'ar. ⁴ And the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." ⁵ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, ⁶ and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-pe'or; but no man knows the place of his burial to this day. ⁷ Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor

his natural force abated. ⁸ And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

⁹ And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; so the people of Israel obeyed him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. ¹⁰ And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, ¹¹ none like him for all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, ¹² and for all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.

34.1-12: The death of Moses. This chapter resumes the story from the end of Numbers, after Moses' "Deuteronomic" addresses to Israel. **1:** Two traditions about the place of Moses' death are included here: *Mount Nebo* is in Transjordan east of Jericho; *Mount Pisgah* is a peak in the same range, slightly west. **2-3:** From this lofty height Moses looks northward to the Sea of Galilee (area of Dan and Naphtali), to the Western Sea (Mediterranean), south to the Negeb (southern wilderness of Judah) and the Jordan valley as far south as *Zoar* (once located at the end of the Dead Sea; Gen.14.2). **6:** *He* (i.e. the LORD) secretly buried Moses. **9:** Compare Num. 27.18-23. **10-11:** For the judgment that Moses was the greatest of Israel's prophets, see 18.15-22; Num.12.6-8; compare 11.24-30; Hos.12.13.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

After long years of wandering in the desert, permission came at last for the Israelites to conquer the Promised Land. The story of Joshua is the story of the conquest. Like most tales of battles, it is not a pleasant one, and many have felt—no doubt rightly—that the God of Joshua is infinitely remote from the God of Jesus. In this book Israel's God appears as a purely nationalistic deity, a God of Battles whose power is chiefly manifested in the prosecution of Holy War.

The story opens with the passage of the Jordan River and the bloody sack of Jericho (chs. 1-6); it then tells how the Hebrew armies moved from the Jordan Valley up into the highlands to capture Ai (chs. 7-8) and, through a humorous deception, to become unwilling allies of the Gibeonites (ch. 9). This led to a great battle with the chieftains of five other Canaanite cities and the conquest of the South (ch. 10). A final engagement in the north resulted in the complete destruction of Canaanite power in Palestine (ch. 11). Following a brief summary of Joshua's triumphs (ch. 12), the book describes the division of the land among the several tribes (chs. 13-23) and how Israel entered into a covenant to serve for ever the God whose might had been so awesomely demonstrated (ch. 24).

Although his victories were many, the character of Joshua remains a shadowy one, and evidence in the book of Judges has led many to suspect that the original conquest of Palestine was neither so comprehensive nor so decisive as is here represented. For later generations of Hebrews, as for the modern reader, the chief value of the book is less historical than theological, in the witness it bears to Israel's faith in a God who intends to establish his kingly rule upon earth, who has clearly exhibited his power to do so, and who summons his people to share the triumph of his kingdom by accepting the covenant which he offers them.

AFTER THE DEATH OF MOSES THE servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, ² "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land which I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. ⁵ No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. ⁶ Be

strong and of good courage; for you shall cause this people to inherit the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. ⁸ This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for

1.1-9: The LORD commands Joshua to conquer the land. The death of Moses provided the signal for beginning the invasion, since he had been forbidden to lead it himself (Num.20.12). The generation which had participated in the Exodus forty years before was now dead. **2:** The Jordan was the natural eastern boundary of Canaan. **4:** The limits of the Promised Land were: the wilderness (desert) to the south and east; the Lebanon mountains to the northwest; the land of the Hittites in northern Syria (once part of the Hittite empire); and to the west, the Great Sea—the Mediterranean. **8:** This book of the law means the legal provisions of the Book of Deuteronomy.

the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, ¹¹ “Pass through the camp, and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions; for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess.’”

12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, ¹³ “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest, and will give you this land.’”

¹⁴ Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan; but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brethren and shall help them, ¹⁵ until the LORD gives rest to your brethren as well as to you, and they also take possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them; then you shall return to the land of your possession, and shall possess it, the land which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.” ¹⁶ And they answered Joshua, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷ Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! ¹⁸ Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever

you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage.”

2 And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went, and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. ² And it was told the king of Jericho, “Behold, certain men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” ³ Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring forth the men that have come to you, who entered your house; for they have come to search out all the land.” ⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them; and she said, “True, men came to me, but I did not know where they came from; ⁵ and when the gate was to be closed, at dark, the men went out; where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” ⁶ But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. ⁷ So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords; and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

⁸ Before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹ and said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the

1.10-18: Joshua's address to the people. Joshua instructed the nation, including the Trans-jordanian tribes, to prepare for the invasion. **14:** *Beyond the Jordan* refers to the region east of the Jordan to which these tribes had been assigned (Num. ch. 32). **15:** After they had helped the other tribes conquer the land west of the Jordan, the two and a half tribes were to be permitted to return to their own allotted territory, *which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them*.

2.1-24: Joshua's spies at Jericho. The men whom Joshua sent to reconnoiter the situation found a friendly reception in the house of Rahab, to whom they promise safety when the city is taken. In Heb.11.31 Rahab is counted as one of the heroes of faith. **1:** *Shittim* was the site of the Israelite camp east of Jordan (Num.33.49). *Jericho*, the largest settlement in the lower Jordan valley, was the gateway to western Palestine. Archaeological excavation has thus far failed to disclose any certain remains of the city of Joshua's time. The fact that Rahab was known to be a *harlot*, accustomed to visits from strange men, would make the spies' presence less conspicuous.

Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any man, because of you; for the LORD your God is he who is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

¹² Now then, swear to me by the LORD that as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign, ¹³ and save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." ¹⁴ And the men said to her, "Our life for yours! If you do not tell this business of ours, then we will deal kindly and faithfully with you when the LORD gives us the land."

¹⁵ Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she dwelt in the wall. ¹⁶ And she said to them, "Go into the hills, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers have returned; then afterward you may go your way." ¹⁷ The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours which you have made us swear. ¹⁸ Behold, when we come into the land, you shall bind this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down; and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. ¹⁹ If any one goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we shall be guiltless; but if a hand is laid upon any one who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. ²⁰ But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless

with respect to your oath which you have made us swear." ²¹ And she said, "According to your words, so be it." Then she sent them away, and they departed; and she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

²² They departed, and went into the hills, and remained there three days, until the pursuers returned; for the pursuers had made search all along the way and found nothing. ²³ Then the two men came down again from the hills, and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun; and they told him all that had befallen them. ²⁴ And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands; and moreover all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of us."

3 Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim, with all the people of Israel; and they came to the Jordan, and lodged there before they passed over. ² At the end of three days the officers went through the camp ³ and commanded the people, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it, ⁴ that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come near it." ⁵ And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." ⁶ And Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on before the people." And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

⁷ And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. ⁸ And you shall com-

3.1-17: The miraculous crossing of the Jordan. The waters of the river, swollen by spring floods, are held back to permit the passage of the Israelites. **3:** *The ark* was the special token of the presence of the LORD (Yahweh), and in early days frequently accompanied the Israelite armies into battle (compare Num.10.35-36; 1 Sam.4.6-9). **4:** *Two thousand cubits*, about three thousand feet. **5:** *To sanctify yourselves* is to perform a ritual purification, as one might before

mand the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.' " ⁹ And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God." ¹⁰ And Joshua said, "Hereby you shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Per'izzites, the Gir'gashites, the Amorites, and the Jeb'usites. ¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is to pass over before you into the Jordan. ¹² Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. ¹³ And when the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be stopped from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."

¹⁴ So, when the people set out from their tents, to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, ¹⁵ and when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), ¹⁶ the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap far off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zar'ethan, and those flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off; and the peo-

ple passed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ And while all Israel were passing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

⁴ When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ² "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, ³ and command them, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.' " ⁴ Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe; ⁵ and Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, ⁶ that this may be a sign among you, when your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' " ⁷ Then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial for ever."

⁸ And the men of Israel did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, as the

a religious ceremony. **10:** *Canaanites, Hittites*, etc., are names given somewhat indiscriminately here to the pre-Israelite population of Palestine. In many parts of the Old Testament the terms Canaanite and Amorite are used in the stricter sense as alternative names for the original people of the land, the other names being used for particular clans (such as the Jebusites, 15.63) or for local enclaves of different ethnic stock (such as the Hittites). **16:** *Adam*, where the waters stopped, perhaps because of a landslide, was about eighteen miles north of Jericho; *Zarethan* some twelve miles farther up. *The Salt Sea* is the Dead Sea. It is appropriately called this, since its waters are twenty-five per cent mineral; its surface is 1292 ft. below sea level.

4.1-5.1: A monument commemorating the passage of the river. Due to the fusion of two different original accounts, the present story tells of the setting up of two sets of twelve memorial stones, one in the bed of the river, the other at Gilgal. **4.3:** This verse evidently belongs to the Gilgal narrative, which is continued in vv. 8 and 20. **4.5,6,7,9:** These verses tell of a monument

LORD told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.⁹ And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.¹⁰ For the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan, until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua.

The people passed over in haste;¹¹ and when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the LORD and the priests passed over before the people.¹² The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had bidden them;¹³ about forty thousand ready armed for war passed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho.¹⁴ On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

15 And the LORD said to Joshua,¹⁶ "Command the priests who bear the ark of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan."¹⁷ Joshua therefore commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."¹⁸ And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their

place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

19 The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.²⁰ And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal.²¹ And he said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, 'What do these stones mean?'²² then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.'²³ For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over,²⁴ so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty; that you may fear the LORD your God for ever."

5 When all the kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites that were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their heart melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the people of Israel.

2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the people of Israel again the second time."³ So Joshua made flint knives, and circumcised the people of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.^a ⁴ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people

a That is the hill of the foreskins

set up in the river bed, still visible in the author's day. **12:** The Transjordanian tribes were the first to cross. **19:** *The first month* was Abib (March-April), later called Nisan. *Gilgal*, the precise location of which is uncertain but obviously close to Jericho, became an important Hebrew sanctuary. Here Saul, the first king of Israel, was later crowned (1 Sam.11.15) and David, the second king, was reconciled with his rebellious subjects (2 Sam.19.15,40).

5.2-12: Israel at Gilgal. The Israelites of the new generation, who had not taken part in the Exodus, are circumcised at Gilgal, where they then set up their camp. Circumcision was a means of admission into full membership in the community, and, at least in later times, was regarded as one of the chief tokens of God's covenant relationship with his people (Gen.17.9-14). **3:** The use of flint knives is merely an example of the conservatism natural to religious ceremonies; the Israelites were familiar with the use of metal. *Gibeath-haaraloth*, meaning "the hill of the foreskins," was evidently a well-known site near Gilgal.

who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵ Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people that were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶ For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the nation, the men of war that came forth out of Egypt, perished, because they did not hearken to the voice of the LORD; to them the LORD swore that he would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷ So it was their children, whom he raised up in their stead, that Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

⁸ When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp till they were healed. ⁹ And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." And so the name of that place is called Gilgal^b to this day.

¹⁰ While the people of Israel were encamped in Gilgal they kept the pass-over on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And on the morrow after the pass-over, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² And the manna ceased on the morrow, when they ate of the produce of the land; and the people of Israel had manna no more, but ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

¹³ When Joshua was by Jericho, he

lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man stood before him with his drawn sword in his hand; and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴ And he said, "No; but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped, and said to him, "What does my lord bid his servant?" ¹⁵ And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

⁶ Now Jericho was shut up from within and from without because of the people of Israel; none went out, and none came in. ² And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given into your hand Jericho, with its king and mighty men of valor. ³ You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. ⁴ And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; and on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him." ⁶ So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." ⁷ And he said to the people, "Go forward; march around the city, and let

^b From Heb *galal* to roll

⁹: The Hebrew verb meaning *rolled away* is from the same root as *Gilgal*, but the etymology is far-fetched; the true meaning of *Gilgal* is "circle [of stones]."

^{5.13-15}: Joshua's encounter with the angelic commander. While reconnoitering Jericho before the siege, Joshua met the commander of the LORD's heavenly armies (compare Num.22.22; 2 Kg.6.17). The end of the story seems to be lost; some command is expected after v. 15 (compare Ex.3.5-12).

^{6.1-14}: The beginning of the siege of Jericho. In obedience to divine instructions, the Israelites marched around the city once a day for six days, with some of the priests carrying the ark and others blowing on trumpets. ⁴: The sacred number *seven* occurs repeatedly in this chapter.

the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD."

8 And as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them.⁹ And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually.¹⁰ But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or let your voice be heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then you shall shout."¹¹ So he caused the ark of the LORD to compass the city, going about it once; and they came into the camp, and spent the night in the camp.

12 Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.¹³ And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD passed on, blowing the trumpets continually; and the armed men went before them, and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually.¹⁴ And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

15 On the seventh day they rose early at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times: it was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times.¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout; for the LORD has given you the city."¹⁷ And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD

for destruction; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers that we sent.¹⁸ But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction, and bring trouble upon it.¹⁹ But all silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are sacred to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."²⁰ So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.²¹ Then they utterly destroyed all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and asses, with the edge of the sword.

22 And Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the harlot's house, and bring out from it the woman, and all who belong to her, as you swore to her."²³ So the young men who had been spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her; and they brought all her kindred, and set them outside the camp of Israel.²⁴ And they burned the city with fire, and all within it; only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.²⁵ But Rahab the harlot, and her father's household, and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive; and she dwelt in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 Joshua laid an oath upon them

6.15-27: The fall of the city. When, on the seventh day, the procession makes a seven-fold circuit of the town, the shout of the Israelite army is enough to overthrow the walls. **17:** *Devoted . . . for destruction* is a technical term meaning that the city and all that is in it is to be offered as a holocaust to the LORD; the taking of booty is strictly forbidden (compare Dt.20.16; 1 Sam. 15.3). **21:** *Utterly destroyed* translates the same technical term discussed in v. 17. **24:** *The house of the LORD* is an obvious anachronism since the temple did not exist and had not even been projected in the time of Joshua. **25:** *To this day* indicates that Rahab's descendants still lived in Jericho in the writer's time. The phrase is a fixed formula in tales which are told to explain

at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD be the man that rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

At the cost of his first-born shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates."

27 So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.

7 But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things; for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things; and the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.

2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-a'ven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." And the men went up and spied out Ai. ³ And they returned to Joshua, and said to him, "Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai; do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are but few." ⁴ So about three thousand went up there from the people; and they fled before the men of Ai, ⁵ and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six men of them, and chased them before the gate as far as Sheb'arim, and slew them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

6 Then Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads. ⁷ And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord GOD, why hast thou brought this people over the

Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! ⁸ O Lord, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! ⁹ For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do for thy great name?"

10 The LORD said to Joshua, "Arise, why have you thus fallen upon your face? ¹¹ Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, and lied, and put them among their own stuff. ¹² Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become a thing for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. ¹³ Up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in the midst of you, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies, until you take away the devoted things from among you." ¹⁴ In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes; and the tribe which the LORD takes shall come near by families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man. ¹⁵ And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all

curious facts, names, and institutions of later days (compare 4.9; 7.26; 8.28; 9.27). 26: The fulfilment of the curse is recorded in 1 Kg.16.34.

7.1-5: Frustration at Ai. Because one man violated the oath of destruction at Jericho, Israel lost the first battle for Ai. 1: This verse anticipates vv. 6-21. 2: Ai was high on the mountain ridge northwest of Jericho. The words *which is near Beth-aven* should be omitted, since "Beth-aven" ("House of Wickedness") is merely a deliberate, mocking distortion of the following name, *Bethel*. Many scholars hold that this story is not really an account of the battle for Ai, but for Bethel, since otherwise the book of Joshua contains no account of the capture of this important site (compare, however, Jg.1.22-26). 3: The spies reported the place to be so weak that a small force could take it.

7.6-26: The discovery and punishment of the criminal. 11: The ancient unitary view of society caused the entire group to be blamed for the sin of one of its members. 14: *The LORD takes,*

that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a shameful thing in Israel.”

16 So Joshua rose early in the morning, and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken; ¹⁷ and he brought near the families of Judah, and the family of the Zer'ahites was taken; and he brought near the family of the Zer'ahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken; ¹⁸ and he brought near his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. ¹⁹ Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and render praise to him; and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” ²⁰ And Achan answered Joshua, “Of a truth I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: ²¹ when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. ²³ And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the people of Israel; and they laid them down before the LORD. ²⁴ And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the mantle and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters, and his oxen and asses and sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, “Why

did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today.” And all Israel stoned him with stones; they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. ²⁶ And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day; then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.^c

8 And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear or be dismayed; take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land; ² and you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king; only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves; lay an ambush against the city, behind it.”

3 So Joshua arose, and all the fighting men, to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor, and sent them forth by night. ⁴ And he commanded them, “Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind it; do not go very far from the city, but hold yourselves all in readiness; ⁵ and I, and all the people who are with me, will approach the city. And when they come out against us, as before, we shall flee before them; ⁶ and they will come out after us, till we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, ‘They are fleeing from us, as before.’ So we will flee from them; ⁷ then you shall rise up from the ambush, and seize the city; for the LORD your God will give it into your hand. ⁸ And when you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire, doing as the LORD has bidden; see, I have commanded you.” ⁹ So Joshua sent them

c That is Trouble

by the casting of lots. **24-25:** The unitary conception of society required that all the members of Achan's family group, human and animal, be purged from Israel (see Dan.6.24 n.). **25:** The Hebrew word *trouble* is from the same root as the proper name Achor (compare Hos.2.15). See the last sentence of v. 26.

8.1-29: Victory at Ai. Israel, now cleansed of Achan's guilt, easily captures and destroys Ai, by a clever stratagem. **4-8:** The plan of battle. **9-23:** These verses tell how the ambush was placed and the ruse successfully carried out. **9:** *Bethel*, the modern Beitin, later one of the chief shrines of the Northern Kingdom (1 Kg.12.28-30), is about one and one-quarter miles

forth; and they went to the place of ambush, and lay between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai; but Joshua spent that night among the people.

10 And Joshua arose early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, with the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. 11 And all the fighting men who were with him went up, and drew near before the city, and encamped on the north side of Ai, with a ravine between them and Ai. 12 And he took about five thousand men, and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. 13 So they stationed the forces, the main encampment which was north of the city and its rear guard west of the city. But Joshua spent that night in the valley. 14 And when the king of Ai saw this he and all his people, the men of the city, made haste and went out early to the descent^d toward the Arabah to meet Israel in battle; but he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. 15 And Joshua and all Israel made a pretense of being beaten before them, and fled in the direction of the wilderness. 16 So all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and as they pursued Joshua they were drawn away from the city. 17 There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, who did not go out after Israel; they left the city open, and pursued Israel.

18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai; for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. 19 And the ambush rose quickly out of their place, and as soon as he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and took it; and they made haste to set the city on

fire. 20 So when the men of Ai looked back, behold, the smoke of the city went up to heaven; and they had no power to flee this way or that, for the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. 21 And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city went up, then they turned back and smote the men of Ai. 22 And the others came forth from the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side; and Israel smote them, until there was left none that survived or escaped. 23 But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24 When Israel had finished slaughtering all the inhabitants of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them and all of them to the very last had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. 25 And all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand, all the people of Ai. 26 For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the javelin, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. 27 Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took as their booty, according to the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. 28 So Joshua burned Ai, and made it for ever a heap of ruins, as it is to this day. 29 And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at the going down of the sun Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree, and cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day.

30 Then Joshua built an altar in

^d Cn: Heb *appointed time*

northwest of Ai. 18: To *stretch out the javelin* is obviously a symbolic gesture (compare Ex. 17.8-13; 2 Kg. 13.15-19). 26: *Utterly destroyed*, see 6.17 n. 28: Since the word *Ai* itself means "ruin," the original name of the city must have been something different. Archaeological excavation has shown that Ai (modern et-Tell) was destroyed about one thousand years before the time of Joshua, so it is probable that the story originally had reference to the capture of another site nearby, possibly Bethel. 29: *A great heap of stones*, an historical "monument" pointed out in the writer's day (compare 4.9; 7.26; Jg. 6.24; 1 Sam. 6.18).

Mount Ebal to the LORD, the God of Israel, ³¹ as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, "an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man has lifted an iron tool"; and they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³² And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. ³³ And all Israel, sojourner as well as homeborn, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, half of them in front of Mount Ger'izim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded at the first, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

9 When all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, heard of this, ² they gathered together with one accord to fight Joshua and Israel.

3 But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to

Jericho and to Ai, ⁴ they on their part acted with cunning, and went and made ready provisions, and took worn-out sacks upon their asses, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, ⁵ with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes; and all their provisions were dry and moldy. ⁶ And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; so now make a covenant with us." ⁷ But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?" ⁸ They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?" ⁹ They said to him, "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, ¹⁰ and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt in Ash'taroth. ¹¹ And our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, "We are your servants; come now, make a covenant with us."'¹² Here is our bread; it was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey, on the day we set forth to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and moldy; ¹³ these wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they are burst; and these garments and shoes of ours are worn out from the very long journey."

8.30-35: The altar on Mt. Ebal. Joshua carries out the command given to Moses in Dt. 27.4-5 (compare 11.29-30) to build an altar and set up a copy of the law. Since this section interrupts the narrative of the conquest (note how naturally 8.29 connects with 9.3), it is probably not original here. **30:** *Mount Ebal* is one of the twin mountains (Gerizim being the other) which flank the pass of Shechem in central Palestine, about twenty miles due north of Ai. **33:** *As Moses . . . had commanded* (compare Dt. 27.11-12).

9.1-27: The stratagem of the Gibeonites. To avoid the fate of Jericho and Ai, the men of Gibeon trick the Israelites into making an alliance with them by pretending to come from a long distance. **3:** *Gibeon* is the modern El-Jib, about seven miles southwest of Ai. **6:** According to the law in Dt. 20.15-16, Israel was permitted to make peace only with those who lived in a

¹⁴ So the men partook of their provisions, and did not ask direction from the LORD. ¹⁵ And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

¹⁶ At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them. ¹⁷ And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephi'rah, Be-er'oth, and Kir'iath-j'e'arim. ¹⁸ But the people of Israel did not kill them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders. ¹⁹ But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. ²⁰ This we will do to them, and let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore to them." ²¹ And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, as the leaders had said of them.

²² Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, "Why did you deceive us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell among us? ²³ Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall always be slaves, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." ²⁴ They answered Joshua, "Because it was told to your

servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; so we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and did this thing. ²⁵ And now, behold, we are in your hand: do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us." ²⁶ So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel; and they did not kill them. ²⁷ But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to continue to this day, in the place which he should choose.

10 When Ado'ni-ze'dek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, ² he^x feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. ³ So Ado'ni-ze'dek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhi'a king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, ⁴ "Come up to me, and help me, and let us smite Gibeon; for it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel." ⁵ Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces,

^x Heb they

far country; close neighbors were to be exterminated. **20:** An oath once taken, even in error, could not safely be broken. **27:** To this day indicates that a group of Gibeonites performed these menial services at the temple in the writer's own time. The place which he should choose is a conventional circumlocution for "Jerusalem" in Deuteronomy (e.g. 12.5,11,14,18) and the historical books (Joshua-Kings) which are related to it. The "nethinim" of later times (see Ezra 8.17 note k) were mostly foreigners who, like the Gibeonites, had come into the hands of the Hebrews usually as captives in war, and had been dedicated as temple servants (Ezra 8.20).

10.1-27: Israel's victory over the five kings. Joshua comes to the rescue of his new allies, the Gibeonites, when they are attacked by a coalition of five powerful Amorite cities. **1-5:** The loss of three important cities, two by conquest and one by capitulation, forced the Canaanite rulers to take the Israelite invasion seriously and unite to discourage any tendency toward defeatism. **3:** Hebron is the most important city in the south of Palestine; the other three places are a con-

and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon, and made war against it.

6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the hill country are gathered against us."⁷ So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.⁸ And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; there shall not a man of them stand before you."⁹ So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal.¹⁰ And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-hor'on, and smote them as far as Aze'kah and Makke'dah.¹¹ And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-hor'on, the LORD threw down great stones from heaven upon them as far as Aze'kah, and they died; there were more who died because of the hailstones than the men of Israel killed with the sword.

12 Then spoke Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the men of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel,

"Sun, stand thou still at Gibeon,
and thou Moon in the valley of
Ai'jalon."

¹³ And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,
until the nation took vengeance on
their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of

Jashar? The sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.¹⁴ There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD hearkened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

15 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

16 These five kings fled, and hid themselves in the cave at Makke'dah.¹⁷ And it was told Joshua, "The five kings have been found, hidden in the cave at Makke'dah."¹⁸ And Joshua said, "Roll great stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them;¹⁹ but do not stay there yourselves, pursue your enemies, fall upon their rear, do not let them enter their cities; for the LORD your God has given them into your hand."²⁰ When Joshua and the men of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were wiped out, and when the remnant which remained of them had entered into the fortified cities,²¹ all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makke'dah; not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.

22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five kings out to me from the cave."²³ And they did so, and brought those five kings out to him from the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.²⁴ And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings." Then they came

siderable distance to the southwest of Jerusalem. 10: The two towns of Upper and Lower Beth-horon controlled the pass to the coastal plain west of Gibeon. 11: *There were more who died because of the hailstones* . . . is a characteristic expression of the writer's belief that Israel's victories were miracles accomplished by the LORD's intervention rather than by the people's skill in warfare. The Book of Joshua views the entire conquest as a miracle rather than a military achievement. 13: *The Book of Jashar* was an ancient collection, now lost, of Hebrew poetry (compare 2 Sam.1.18). The statement that *the sun stayed* is a prosaic literalizing of the poetic imagery of the preceding lines. 16-27: The fugitive kings are captured, humiliated, and

near, and put their feet on their necks.

²⁵ And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and of good courage; for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." ²⁶ And afterward Joshua smote them and put them to death, and he hung them on five trees. And they hung upon the trees until evening; ²⁷ but at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and they set great stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.

²⁸ And Joshua took Makke'dah on that day, and smote it and its king with the edge of the sword; he utterly destroyed every person in it, he left none remaining; and he did to the king of Makke'dah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

²⁹ Then Joshua passed on from Makke'dah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah, and fought against Libnah; ³⁰ and the LORD gave it also and its king into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it; he left none remaining in it; and he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

³¹ And Joshua passed on from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish, and laid siege to it, and assaulted it: ³² and the LORD gave Lachish into the hand of Israel, and he took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it, as he had done to Libnah.

³³ Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he left none remaining.

³⁴ And Joshua passed on with all Israel from Lachish to Eglon; and they laid siege to it, and assaulted it; ³⁵ and they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword; and every person in it he utterly destroyed that day, as he had done to Lachish.

³⁶ Then Joshua went up with all Israel from Eglon to Hebron; and they assaulted it, ³⁷ and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and its king and its towns, and every person in it; he left none remaining, as he had done to Eglon, and utterly destroyed it with every person in it.

³⁸ Then Joshua, with all Israel, turned back to Debir and assaulted it, ³⁹ and he took it with its king and all its towns; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed every person in it; he left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king, so he did to Debir and to its king.

⁴⁰ So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.

⁴¹ And Joshua defeated them from Ka'desh-bar'nea to Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, as far as Gibeon.

⁴² And Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

⁴³ Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

|| When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Ach'shaph, ² and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Ara-

killed. ²⁷: The phrase *to this very day* shows that the story served to explain a heap of stones visible in the writer's own time.

10.28-43: Summary of Joshua's conquests in the south. After the defeat of the five kings Israel had no difficulty in subjugating the whole of southern Palestine. **40-42:** The completeness of the victory.

11.1-23: Israel's victory over the kings of the north. When the northern Canaanite rulers, aroused by the report of Israel's victories in the south, unite to oppose her, they are overwhelmingly defeated. **1:** *Hazor* was one of the largest cities of Galilee. Excavations have impressively demonstrated its importance in antiquity and confirmed the fact that it was cap-

bah south of Chin'eroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west,³ to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, and the Jeb'usites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah.⁴ And they came out, with all their troops, a great host, in number like the sand that is upon the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.⁵ And all these kings joined their forces, and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel.

6 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel; you shall hamstring their horses, and burn their chariots with fire."⁷ So Joshua came suddenly upon them with all his people of war, by the waters of Merom, and fell upon them.⁸ And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel, who smote them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Mis'rephoth-ma'im, and eastward as far as the valley of Mizpeh; and they smote them, until they left none remaining.⁹ And Joshua did to them as the LORD bade him; he hamstringed their horses, and burned their chariots with fire.

10 And Joshua turned back at that time, and took Hazor, and smote its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms.¹¹ And they put to the sword all who were in it, utterly destroying them; there was none left that breathed, and he burned Hazor with fire.¹² And all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took, and smote them with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded.¹³ But none of the cities that stood on mounds

did Israel burn, except Hazor only; that Joshua burned.¹⁴ And all the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the people of Israel took for their booty; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any that breathed.¹⁵ As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland¹⁷ from Mount Halak, that rises toward Se'ir, as far as Ba'al-gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. And he took all their kings, and smote them, and put them to death.¹⁸ Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.¹⁹ There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; they took all in battle.²⁰ For it was the LORD's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be utterly destroyed, and should receive no mercy but be exterminated, as the LORD commanded Moses.

21 And Joshua came at that time, and wiped out the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities.²² There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, did some remain.²³ So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an in-

tured at about the time indicated in this narrative. 2: The *Arabah* is the Jordan Valley; *Chin'eroth* is the ancient name for the Sea of Galilee. 5: The *waters of Merom* are identified by many with a brook which flows from Merom (modern Meiron) into the Sea of Galilee on the northwest. 8: *Sidon* is the great Phoenician seaport to the north of Palestine. 16-20: With victory in the north, the conquest of the land is now complete. 21: The *Anakim* were reputed to be a race of giants (compare 13.12; Dt.2.10,11). 23: Nothing now remained but to divide the land among the various tribes.

heritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

12 Now these are the kings of the land, whom the people of Israel defeated, and took possession of their land beyond the Jordan toward the sunrising, from the valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon, with all the Arabah eastward: ² Sihon king of the Amorites who dwelt at Heshbon, and ruled from Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and from the middle of the valley as far as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites, that is, half of Gilead, ³ and the Arabah to the Sea of Chin'neroth eastward, and in the direction of Beth-jesh'imoth, to the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, southward to the foot of the slopes of Pisgah; ⁴ and Og^e king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Reph'aim, who dwelt at Ash'taroth and at Ed're-i ⁵ and ruled over Mount Hermon and Sal'ecah and all Bashan to the boundary of the Gesh'urites and the Ma-ac'athites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of Sihon king of Heshbon. ⁶ Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the people of Israel defeated them; and Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land for a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas'seh.

7 And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Ba'al-gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, that rises toward Se'ir (and Joshua gave their land to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their allotments, ⁸ in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites): ⁹ the king of

Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; ¹⁰ the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; ¹¹ the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; ¹² the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; ¹³ the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; ¹⁴ the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; ¹⁵ the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; ¹⁶ the king of Makke'dah, one; the king of Bethel, one; ¹⁷ the king of Tap'puah, one; the king of Hephher, one; ¹⁸ the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lashar'on, one; ¹⁹ the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; ²⁰ the king of Shim'ron-me'ron, one; the king of Ach'shaph, one; ²¹ the king of Ta'anach, one; the king of Megid'do, one; ²² the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jok'ne-am in Carmel, one; ²³ the king of Dor in Naphath-dor, one; the king of Goi'im in Galilee,^f one; ²⁴ the king of Tirzah, one: in all, thirty-one kings.

13 Now Joshua was old and advanced in years; and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to be possessed. ² This is the land that yet remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all those of the Gesh'urites ³ (from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is reckoned as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ash'kelon, Gath, and Ekron), and those of the Avvim, ⁴ in the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mer'ah which belongs to the Sido'nians, to Aphek, to the boundary of the Amorites, ⁵ and the land of the Geb'alites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Ba'al-gad below Mount Hermon to the entrance of Hamath, ⁶ all the inhabitants of the hill country from Leb-

^e Gk: Heb the boundary of Og ^f Gk: Heb Gilgal

12.1-24: Summary of Israel's victories. 1-6: Moses' exploits in Transjordan. These events are related in Num.21.21-35. **7-24:** Joshua's conquests in the territory west of the Jordan. Many of these names were not mentioned previously. The "kings" were merely local chieftains.

13.1-33: The beginning of the distribution of the land. Chapters 13-21 are entirely concerned with this subject. **2-7:** These are territories as yet unconquered, most of them (except for the

anon to Mis'rephoth-ma'im, even all the Sido'nians. I will myself drive them out from before the people of Israel; only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you.⁷ Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manas'seh."

8 With the other half of the tribe of Manas'seh⁸ the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them: ⁹ from Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland of Med'eba as far as Dibon;¹⁰ and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the Ammonites;¹¹ and Gilead, and the region of the Gesh'urites and Ma-ac'athites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Sal'ecah;¹² all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ash'taroht and in Ed're-i (he alone was left of the remnant of the Reph'aim); these Moses had defeated and driven out.¹³ Yet the people of Israel did not drive out the Gesh'urites or the Ma-ac'athites; but Geshur and Ma'acath dwell in the midst of Israel to this day.

14 To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance; the offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance, as he said to him.

15 And Moses gave an inheritance to the tribe of the Reubenites according to their families.¹⁶ So their territory was from Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland by Med'eba;¹⁷ with Heshbon, and all its cities that are in the tableland; Dibon, and Ba'

moth-ba'al, and Beth-ba'al-me'on,¹⁸ and Jahaz, and Ked'emoth, and Meph'a-ath,¹⁹ and Kir'iatha'im, and Sibmah, and Zer'eth-sha'har on the hill of the valley,²⁰ and Beth-pe'or, and the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jesh'imoth,²¹ that is, all the cities of the tableland, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses defeated with the leaders of Mid'ian, Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the princes of Sihon, who dwelt in the land.²² Balaam also, the son of Be'or, the soothsayer, the people of Israel killed with the sword among the rest of their slain.²³ And the border of the people of Reuben was the Jordan as a boundary. This was the inheritance of the Reubenites, according to their families with their cities and villages.

24 And Moses gave an inheritance also to the tribe of the Gadites, according to their families.²⁵ Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites, to Aro'er, which is east of Rabbah,²⁶ and from Heshbon to Ra'math-miz'peh and Bet'onim, and from Mahana'im to the territory of Debir,^h ²⁷ and in the valley Beth-ha'ram, Beth-nim'rah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, having the Jordan as a boundary, to the lower end of the Sea of Chin'nereth, eastward beyond the Jordan.²⁸ This is the inheritance of the Gadites according to their families, with their cities and villages.

29 And Moses gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manas'seh; it was allotted to the half-tribe of the Manas'sites according to their families.³⁰ Their region extended from Mahana'im, through all Bashan, the whole

g Cn: Heb *With it* h Gk Syr Vg: Heb *Lidebir*

Philistine cities) lying outside Palestine proper. **8-32:** The land east of the Jordan is allotted to Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. **12:** *The Rephaim*, like the Anakim of 11.21, were regarded as an aboriginal race of giants (Dt.3.11). **13:** The statement that *the people of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites . . .* is the first of a series of passages in this book and in Judges, derived from an ancient source, which indicate that the conquest was less thoroughgoing than the later editor of the book as a whole would have his readers understand (15.63; 16.10; 17.12-13; Jg.1.19,21,27-35). **33:** On *Levi*, see ch. 21.

kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Ja'ir, which are in Bashan, sixty cities, ³¹ and half Gilead, and Ash'taroth, and Ed're-i, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan; these were allotted to the people of Machir the son of Manas'seh for the half of the Machirites according to their families.

32 These are the inheritances which Moses distributed in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. ³³ But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, as he said to them.

14 And these are the inheritances which the people of Israel received in the land of Canaan, which Elea'zar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel distributed to them. ² Their inheritance was by lot, as the LORD had commanded Moses for the nine and one-half tribes. ³ For Moses had given an inheritance to the two and one-half tribes beyond the Jordan; but to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them. ⁴ For the people of Joseph were two tribes, Manas'seh and E'phraim; and no portion was given to the Levites in the land, but only cities to dwell in, with their pasture lands for their cattle and their substance. ⁵ The people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses; they allotted the land.

6 Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal; and Caleb the son of Jephun'neh the Ken'izzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Ka'desh-bar'nea concerning you and me. ⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Ka'desh-bar'nea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in

my heart. ⁸ But my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the LORD my God. ⁹ And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children for ever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' ¹⁰ And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day eighty-five years old. ¹¹ I am still as strong to this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war, and for going and coming. ¹² So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day; for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities: it may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out as the LORD said."

13 Then Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephun'neh for an inheritance. ¹⁴ So Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephun'neh the Ken'izzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁵ Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kir'iath-ar'ba;ⁱ this Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war.

15 The lot for the tribe of the people of Judah according to their families reached southward to the boundary of Edom, to the wilderness of Zin at the farthest south. ² And their south boundary ran from the end of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward; ³ it goes out southward of the

i That is The city of Arba

14.1-5: General introduction to the allotment of land in western Palestine.

14.6-15: Hebron assigned to Caleb. Caleb now claims the reward which Moses had promised him (Num.14.24) for his faithfulness (Num.13.30) and receives Hebron as a permanent possession.

15.1-63: The territory assigned to Judah. 1-12: The boundaries of Judah described: vv. 2-4, from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean on the south; vv. 5-11, the Dead Sea on the east; and from the north end of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean on the north; v. 12, the Mediterranean

ascent of Akrab'bim, passes along to Zin, and goes up south of Ka'desh-bar'nea, along by Hezron, up to Ad-dar, turns about to Karka, ⁴ passes along to Azmon, goes out by the Brook of Egypt, and comes to its end at the sea. This shall be your south boundary. ⁵ And the east boundary is the Salt Sea, to the mouth of the Jordan. And the boundary on the north side runs from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan; ⁶ and the boundary goes up to Beth-hoglah, and passes along north of Beth-arabah; and the boundary goes up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; ⁷ and the boundary goes up to Debir from the Valley of Achor, and so northward, turning toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adum'mim, which is on the south side of the valley; and the boundary passes along to the waters of En-she'mesh, and ends at En-ro'gel; ⁸ then the boundary goes up by the valley of the son of Hinnom at the southern shoulder of the Jeb'usite (that is, Jerusalem); and the boundary goes up to the top of the mountain that lies over against the valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the valley of Reph'aim; ⁹ then the boundary extends from the top of the mountain to the spring of the Waters of Nephto'ah, and from there to the cities of Mount Ephron; then the boundary bends round to Ba'alalah (that is, Kir'iath-je'arim); ¹⁰ and the boundary circles west of Ba'alalah to Mount Se'ir, passes along to the northern shoulder of Mount Je'arim (that is, Ches'alon), and goes down to Beth-she'mesh, and passes along by Timnah; ¹¹ the boundary goes out to the shoulder of the hill north of Ekron, then the boundary bends round to Shik'keron, and passes along to Mount Ba'alalah, and goes out to Jabneel; then the boundary comes to an end at the sea. ¹² And the west boundary was the Great Sea with its

coast-line. This is the boundary round about the people of Judah according to their families.

¹³ According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephun'neh a portion among the people of Judah, Kir'iath-ar'ba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). ¹⁴ And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, She'shai and Ahi'man and Talmai, the descendants of Anak. ¹⁵ And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly was Kir'iath-se'pher. ¹⁶ And Caleb said, "Whoever smites Kir'iath-se'pher, and takes it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife." ¹⁷ And Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. ¹⁸ When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field; and she alighted from her ass, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" ¹⁹ She said to him, "Give me a present; since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

²⁰ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Judah according to their families. ²¹ The cities belonging to the tribe of the people of Judah in the extreme South, toward the boundary of Edom, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, ²² Kinah, Dimo'nah, Ada'dah, ²³ Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, ²⁴ Ziph, Telem, Be-a'loth, ²⁵ Ha'zor-hadat'tah, Ker'i-oth-hezron (that is, Hazor), ²⁶ Amam, Shema, Mola'dah, ²⁷ Ha'zar-gad'dah, Heshmon, Beth-pel'et, ²⁸ Hazar-shu'al, Beer-sheba, Biziothi'ah, ²⁹ Ba'alalah, I'im, Ezem, ³⁰ Elto'lad, Chesil, Hormah, ³¹ Ziklag, Madman'nah, Sansan'nah, ³² Leba'oth, Shilhim, A'in, and Rimmon: in all, twenty-nine cities, with their villages.

on the west. **13-19:** More information about Caleb (compare 14.6-15). **14-19:** These verses are almost identical with Jg.1.11-15. **20-63:** A list of Judah's towns by districts. Many scholars believe that this list was taken from an official register of the subdivisions of the Kingdom of Judah, perhaps in the time of Josiah.

33 And in the lowland, Eshta'ol, Zorah, Ashnah, ³⁴ Zano'ah, En-gan-nim, Tap'puah, Enam, ³⁵ Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Aze'kah, ³⁶ Shara'im, Aditha'im, Gede'rah, Gede-rotha'im: fourteen cities with their villages.

37 Zenan, Hadash'ah, Mig'dal-gad, ³⁸ Di'lean, Mizpeh, Jok'theel, ³⁹ Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, ⁴⁰ Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, ⁴¹ Gede'roth, Beth-da'gon, Na'amah, and Makke'dah: sixteen cities with their villages.

42 Libnah, Ether, Ashan, ⁴³ Iph-tah, Ashnah, Nezeb, ⁴⁴ Kei'lah, Achzib, and Mare'shah: nine cities with their villages.

45 Ekron, with its towns and its villages; ⁴⁶ from Ekron to the sea, all that were by the side of Ashdod, with their villages.

47 Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; to the Brook of Egypt, and the Great Sea with its coast-line.

48 And in the hill country, Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, ⁴⁹ Dannah, Kir'iath-san'-nah (that is, Debir), ⁵⁰ Anab, Esh'-temoh, Anim, ⁵¹ Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages.

52 Arab, Dumah, Eshan, ⁵³ Janim, Beth-tap'puah, Aphe'kah, ⁵⁴ Hum-tah, Kir'iath-ar'ba (that is, Hebron), and Zi'or: nine cities with their villages.

55 Ma'on, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, ⁵⁶ Jezreel, Jok'de-am, Zano'ah, ⁵⁷ Kain, Gib'e-ah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages.

58 Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, ⁵⁹ Ma'-arath, Beth-anoth, and El'tekon: six cities with their villages.

60 Kir'iath-ba'al (that is, Kir'iath-je'arim), and Rabbah: two cities with their villages.

61 In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, Seca'cah, ⁶² Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En-ge'di: six cities with their villages.

63 But the Jeb'usites, the inhabit-

ants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out; so the Jeb'usites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

16 The allotment of the descendants of Joseph went from the Jordan by Jericho, east of the waters of Jericho, into the wilderness, going up from Jericho into the hill country to Bethel; ² then going from Bethel to Luz, it passes along to At'aroth, the territory of the Archites; ³ then it goes down westward to the territory of the Japh'letites, as far as the territory of Lower Beth-hor'on, then to Gezer, and it ends at the sea.

4 The people of Joseph, Manas'-seh and E'phraim, received their inheritance.

5 The territory of the E'phraimites by their families was as follows: the boundary of their inheritance on the east was At'aroth-ad'dar as far as Upper Beth-hor'on, ⁶ and the boundary goes thence to the sea; on the north is Mich-me'thath; then on the east the boundary turns round toward Ta'anath-shi'loh, and passes along beyond it on the east to Jan-o'ah, ⁷ then it goes down from Jan-o'ah to At'aroth and to Na'arah, and touches Jericho, ending at the Jordan. ⁸ From Tap'puah the boundary goes westward to the brook Kanah, and ends at the sea. Such is the inheritance of the tribe of the E'phraimites by their families, ⁹ together with the towns which were set apart for the E'phraimites within the inheritance of the Manas'sites, all those towns with their villages. ¹⁰ However they did not drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: so the Canaanites have dwelt in the midst of E'phraim to this day but have become slaves to do forced labor.

17 Then allotment was made to the tribe of Manas'seh, for he was the first-born of Joseph. To Machir the first-born of Manas'seh, the father

16.1-17.18: The territory assigned to the Joseph tribes. The two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are allotted the central highlands. 1-4: The southern boundary ran roughly from Jericho to the Mediterranean. 5-10: Delimitation of the boundary of Ephraim. 10: This verse is very similar to Jg.1.29. 17.1-6: Arrangements for the clans of Manasseh. 2: *The rest of the*

of Gilead, were allotted Gilead and Bashan, because he was a man of war. ² And allotments were made to the rest of the tribe of Manas'sseh, by their families, Abi-e'zer, Helek, As'ri-el, Shechem, Hopher, and Shemi'da; these were the male descendants of Manas'sseh the son of Joseph, by their families.

3 Now Zeloph'ehad the son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manas'sseh, had no sons, but only daughters; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ⁴ They came before Elea'zar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the leaders, and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance along with our brethren." So according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father. ⁵ Thus there fell to Manas'sseh ten portions, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is on the other side of the Jordan; ⁶ because the daughters of Manas'sseh received an inheritance along with his sons. The land of Gilead was allotted to the rest of the Manas'ssites.

7 The territory of Manas'sseh reached from Asher to Mich-me'thath, which is east of Shechem; then the boundary goes along southward to the inhabitants of En-tap'puah. ⁸ The land of Tap'puah belonged to Manas'sseh, but the town of Tap'puah on the boundary of Manas'sseh belonged to the sons of E'phraim. ⁹ Then the boundary went down to the brook Kanah. The cities here, to the south of the brook, among the cities of Manas'sseh, belong to E'phraim. Then the boundary of Manas'sseh goes on the north side of the brook and ends at the sea; ¹⁰ the land to the south being E'phraim's and that to the north being Manas'sseh's, with the sea forming its boundary; on the north

Asher is reached, and on the east Is'sachar. ¹¹ Also in Is'sachar and in Asher Manas'sseh had Beth-she'an and its villages, and Ibleam and its villages, and the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of En-dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of Ta'anach and its villages, and the inhabitants of Megid'do and its villages; the third is Naphath. ¹² Yet the sons of Manas'sseh could not take possession of those cities; but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. ¹³ But when the people of Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, and did not utterly drive them out.

14 And the tribe of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me but one lot and one portion as an inheritance, although I am a numerous people, since hitherto the LORD has blessed me?" ¹⁵ And Joshua said to them, "If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest, and there clear ground for yourselves in the land of the Per'izzites and the Reph'aim, since the hill country of E'phraim is too narrow for you." ¹⁶ The tribe of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us; yet all the Canaanites who dwell in the plain have chariots of iron, both those in Beth-she'an and its villages and those in the Valley of Jezreel." ¹⁷ Then Joshua said to the house of Joseph, to E'phraim and Manas'sseh, "You are a numerous people, and have great power; you shall not have one lot only, ¹⁸ but the hill country shall be yours, for though it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong."

18 Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meet-

j Heb obscure

tribe, those who had not already settled east of the Jordan (13.29-31). 7-13: Delimitation of the boundary of Manasseh. 11-13: These verses are closely parallel to Jg.1.27-28. 14-18: The Joseph tribes demand and receive a double portion.

18.1-19.51: The territory assigned to the other tribes. 1-10: General introduction. 1: Shiloh, in the central highlands, was the principal Israelite sanctuary in early days (Jg.18.31; 1 Sam.

ing there; the land lay subdued before them.

2 There remained among the people of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned. ³ So Joshua said to the people of Israel, "How long will you be slack to go in and take possession of the land, which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you? ⁴ Provide three men from each tribe, and I will send them out that they may set out and go up and down the land, writing a description of it with a view to their inheritances, and then come to me. ⁵ They shall divide it into seven portions, Judah continuing in his territory on the south, and the house of Joseph in their territory on the north. ⁶ And you shall describe the land in seven divisions and bring the description here to me; and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. ⁷ The Levites have no portion among you, for the priesthood of the LORD is their heritage; and Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manas'seh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."

8 So the men started on their way; and Joshua charged those who went to write the description of the land, saying, "Go up and down and write a description of the land, and come again to me; and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh." ⁹ So the men went and passed up and down in the land and set down in a book a description of it by towns in seven divisions; then they came to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. ¹⁰ and Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD; and there Joshua apportioned the land to the people of Israel, to each his portion.

11 The lot of the tribe of Benjamin according to its families came up, and the territory allotted to it fell between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Joseph. ¹² On the north side their

boundary began at the Jordan; then the boundary goes up to the shoulder north of Jericho, then up through the hill country westward; and it ends at the wilderness of Beth-a'ven. ¹³ From there the boundary passes along southward in the direction of Luz, to the shoulder of Luz (the same is Bethel), then the boundary goes down to At'aroath-ad'dar, upon the mountain that lies south of Lower Beth-hor'on. ¹⁴ Then the boundary goes in another direction, turning on the western side southward from the mountain that lies to the south, opposite Beth-hor'on, and it ends at Kir'iaath-ba'al (that is, Kir'iaath-je'arim), a city belonging to the tribe of Judah. This forms the western side. ¹⁵ And the southern side begins at the outskirts of Kir'iaath-je'arim; and the boundary goes from there to Ephron,^k to the spring of the Waters of Nephto'ah; ¹⁶ then the boundary goes down to the border of the mountain that overlooks the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is at the north end of the valley of Reph'aim; and it then goes down the valley of Hinnom, south of the shoulder of the Jeb'usites, and downward to En-rogel; ¹⁷ then it bends in a northerly direction going on to En-she'mesh, and thence goes to Geli'loth, which is opposite the ascent of Adum'mim; then it goes down to the Stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; ¹⁸ and passing on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-arahab^l it goes down to the Arabah; ¹⁹ then the boundary passes on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-hoglah; and the boundary ends at the northern bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan: this is the southern border. ²⁰ The Jordan forms its boundary on the eastern side. This is the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin, according to its families, boundary by boundary round about.

21 Now the cities of the tribe of

^k Cn See 15.9. Heb westward

^l Gk: Heb to the shoulder over against the Arabah

Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-ke'-ziz, ²² Beth-arabah, Zemara'im, Bethel, ²³ Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, ²⁴ Che'phar-am'moni, Ophni, Geba—twelve cities with their villages: ²⁵ Gibeon, Ramah, Be-er'oth, ²⁶ Mizpeh, Chephi'rah, Mo-zah, ²⁷ Rekem, Irpeel, Tar'aloh, ²⁸ Zela, Ha-eleph, Jebus^m (that is, Jerusalem), Gib'e-ahⁿ and Kir'iath-je'arim^o—fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin according to its families.

19 The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of Simeon, according to its families; and its inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. ² And it had for its inheritance Beer-sheba, Sheba, Mola'dah, ³ Hazar-shu'al, Balah, Ezem, ⁴ Elto'lad, Bethul, Hormah, ⁵ Ziklag, Beth-mar'caboth, Ha'zar-su'-sah, ⁶ Beth-leba'oth, and Sharu'hen—thirteen cities with their villages; ⁷ En-rimmon, Ether, and Ashan—four cities with their villages; ⁸ together with all the villages round about these cities as far as Ba'alath-beer, Ramah of the Negeb. This was the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon according to its families. ⁹ The inheritance of the tribe of Simeon formed part of the territory of Judah; because the portion of the tribe of Judah was too large for them, the tribe of Simeon obtained an inheritance in the midst of their inheritance.

¹⁰ The third lot came up for the tribe of Zebulun, according to its families. And the territory of its inheritance reached as far as Sarid; ¹¹ then its boundary goes up westward, and on to Mar'eal, and touches Dab'besheth, then the brook which is east of Jok'-ne-am; ¹² from Sarid it goes in the other direction eastward toward the sunrise to the boundary of Chis'loth-ta'bor; thence it goes to Dab'erath, then up to Japhi'a; ¹³ from there it passes along on the east toward the sunrise to Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and going

on to Rimmon it bends toward Ne'ah; ¹⁴ then on the north the boundary turns about to Han'nathon, and it ends at the valley of Iph'tahel; ¹⁵ and Kattath, Nahal'al, Shimron, I'dalah, and Bethlehem—twelve cities with their villages. ¹⁶ This is the inheritance of the tribe of Zebulun, according to its families—these cities with their villages.

¹⁷ The fourth lot came out for Is'sachar, for the tribe of Is'sachar, according to its families. ¹⁸ Its territory included Jezreel, Chesul'loth, Shunem, ¹⁹ Haph'ara-im, Shion, Ana'harath, ²⁰ Rabbith, Kish'ion, Ebez, ²¹ Remeth, En-gan'nim, En-had'dah, Beth-paz'-zez; ²² the boundary also touches Tabor, Shahazu'mah, and Beth-she'-mesh, and its boundary ends at the Jordan—sixteen cities with their villages. ²³ This is the inheritance of the tribe of Is'sachar, according to its families—the cities with their villages.

²⁴ The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher according to its families. ²⁵ Its territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Ach'shaph, ²⁶ Allam'melech, Amad, and Mishal; on the west it touches Carmel and Shihor-lib'nath, ²⁷ then it turns eastward, it goes to Beth-dagon, and touches Zebulun and the valley of Iph'tahel northward to Beth-emek and Nei'el; then it continues in the north to Cabul, ²⁸ Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, Kanah, as far as Sidon the Great; ²⁹ then the boundary turns to Ramah, reaching to the fortified city of Tyre; then the boundary turns to Hosah, and it ends at the sea; Mahalab,^p Achzib, ³⁰ Ummah, Aphek and Rehob—twenty-two cities with their villages. ³¹ This is the inheritance of the tribe of Asher according to its families—these cities with their villages.

³² The sixth lot came out for the tribe of Naph'tali, for the tribe of

^m Gk Syr Vg: Heb the Jebusite ⁿ Heb Gibeath
^o Gk: Heb Kir'iath
^p Cn Compare Gk: Heb Mehebel

Naph'tali, according to its families.

³³ And its boundary ran from Heleph, from the oak in Za-anan'nim, and Ad'ami-nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; and it ended at the Jordan;

³⁴ then the boundary turns westward to Az'noth-tabor, and goes from there to Hukkok, touching Zeb'ulun at the south, and Asher on the west, and Judah on the east at the Jordan. ³⁵ The fortified cities are Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chin'nereth, ³⁶ Ad'amah, Ramah, Hazor, ³⁷ Kedesh, Ed're-i, En-ha'zor, ³⁸ Yiron, Mig'dal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-she'mesh—nineteen cities with their villages.

³⁹ This is the inheritance of the tribe of Naph'tali according to its families—the cities with their villages.

⁴⁰ The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan, according to its families.

⁴¹ And the territory of its inheritance included Zorah, Esh'ta-ol, Ir-she'mesh,

⁴² Sha-alab'bin, Ai'jalon, Ithlah,

⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴ El'tekeh,

Gib'bethon, Ba'alath, ⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene-

be'rak, Gath-rim'mon, ⁴⁶ and Me-

jar'kon and Rakkon with the territory

over against Joppa. ⁴⁷ When the territory

of the Danites was lost to them,

the Danites went up and fought against

Leshem, and after capturing it and

putting it to the sword they took possession

of it and settled in it, calling

Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan

their ancestor. ⁴⁸ This is the inheritance

of the tribe of Dan, according to

their families—these cities with their

villages.

⁴⁹ When they had finished distrib-

uting the several territories of the land

as inheritances, the people of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun. ⁵⁰ By command of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, Tim'nath-se'rah in the hill country of E'phraim; and he rebuilt the city, and settled in it.

⁵¹ These are the inheritances which Elea'zar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel distributed by lot at Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing the land.

20 ² Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Say to the people of Israel, 'Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, ³ that the manslayer who kills any person without intent or unwittingly may flee there; they shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood. ⁴ He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and explain his case to the elders of that city; then they shall take him into the city, and give him a place, and he shall remain with them. ⁵ And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not give up the slayer into his hand; because he killed his neighbor unwittingly, having had no enmity against him in times past. ⁶ And he shall remain in that city until he has stood before the congregation for judgment, until the death of him who is high priest at the time: then the slayer may go again to his own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled.'"

⁷ So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee

south (vv. 41–46), but was soon forced to emigrate north to the region of *Leshem* (Laish, Jg. 18.27). **49–51:** Conclusion of the distribution of land to the tribes.

20.1–9: Cities of refuge appointed (in accordance with the law of Dt.19.1–13) to which an accused murderer might flee until his case was adjudicated. **3:** *The avenger of blood* was the deceased man's nearest relative, who had the obligation of avenging his death. The word translated "avenger" is the same as that translated "next of kin" in Ru.3.9 and other passages, and "redeemer" in still others (e.g. Pr.23.11). The underlying concept of a near kinsman with certain rights and duties is the same. **4:** *The gate of the city* was the place where the council of the elders (the older members of the community who were responsible for its welfare) met and where business was normally transacted (Ru.4.1). The gate was not merely an opening in the city wall, but an enclosed structure sometimes containing several rooms and more than one story.

in the hill country of Naph'tali, and Shechem in the hill country of E'phraim, and Kir'iath-ar'ba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah.

⁸ And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they appointed Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland, from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manas'seh.

⁹ These were the cities designated for all the people of Israel, and for the stranger sojourning among them, that any one who killed a person without intent could flee there, so that he might not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, till he stood before the congregation.

21 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came to Elea'zar the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel; ² and they said to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, "The LORD commanded through Moses that we be given cities to dwell in, along with their pasture lands for our cattle."
³ So by command of the LORD the people of Israel gave to the Levites the following cities and pasture lands out of their inheritance.

⁴ The lot came out for the families of the Ko'hathites. So those Levites who were descendants of Aaron the priest received by lot from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, thirteen cities.

⁵ And the rest of the Ko'hathites received by lot from the families of the tribe of E'phraim, from the tribe of Dan and the half-tribe of Manas'seh, ten cities.

⁶ The Gersonites received by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naph'tali, and from the half-tribe of Manas'seh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

⁷ The Merar'ites according to their

families received from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the tribe of Zeb'ulun, twelve cities.

⁸ These cities and their pasture lands the people of Israel gave by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

⁹ Out of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Simeon they gave the following cities mentioned by name, ¹⁰ which went to the descendants of Aaron, one of the families of the Ko'hathites who belonged to the Levites; since the lot fell to them first. ¹¹ They gave them Kir'iath-ar'ba (Arba being the father of Anak), that is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, along with the pasture lands round about it. ¹² But the fields of the city and its villages had been given to Caleb the son of Jephun'neh as his possession.

¹³ And to the descendants of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the slayer, with its pasture lands, Libnah with its pasture lands, ¹⁴ Jattir with its pasture lands, Esh-temo'a with its pasture lands, ¹⁵ Holon with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands, ¹⁶ A'in with its pasture lands, Juttah with its pasture lands, Beth-she'mesh with its pasture lands—nine cities out of these two tribes; ¹⁷ then out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands, ¹⁸ An'athoth with its pasture lands, and Almon with its pasture lands—four cities. ¹⁹ The cities of the descendants of Aaron, the priests, were in all thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

²⁰ As to the rest of the Ko'hathites belonging to the Ko'hathite families of the Levites, the cities allotted to them were out of the tribe of E'phraim. ²¹ To them were given Shechem, the city of refuge for the slayer, with its pasture lands in the hill country of E'phraim, Gezer with its pasture lands, ²² Kib'za-im with its pasture lands, Beth-hor'on with its pasture lands—four

21.1-42: The cities assigned to the tribe of Levi, which, because of its religious functions, did not receive an allotment of territory like the others (compare 13.14,33).

cities; ²³ and out of the tribe of Dan, El'teke with its pasture lands, Gib'bethon with its pasture lands, ²⁴ Ai'jalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rim'mon with its pasture lands—four cities; ²⁵ and out of the half-tribe of Manas'seh, Ta'anach with its pasture lands, and Gath-rim'mon with its pasture lands—two cities. ²⁶ The cities of the families of the rest of the Ko'hathites were ten in all with their pasture lands.

²⁷ And to the Gershonites, one of the families of the Levites, were given out of the half-tribe of Manas'seh, Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Be-esh'terah with its pasture lands—two cities; ²⁸ and out of the tribe of Is'sachar, Ki'shion with its pasture lands, Dab'erath with its pasture lands, ²⁹ Jarmuth with its pasture lands, En-gan'nim with its pasture lands—four cities; ³⁰ and out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands, ³¹ Helkath with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands—four cities; ³² and out of the tribe of Naph'tali, Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer, Ham'moth-dor with its pasture lands, and Kartan with its pasture lands—three cities. ³³ The cities of the several families of the Gershonites were in all thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

³⁴ And to the rest of the Levites, the Merar'ite families, were given out of the tribe of Zeb'ulun, Jok'ne-am with its pasture lands, Kartah with its pasture lands, ³⁵ Dimnah with its pasture lands, Na'halal with its pasture lands—four cities; ³⁶ and out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its pasture lands, Jahaz with its pasture lands, ³⁷ Ked'emoth with its pasture lands, and Meph'a-ath with its pasture lands—four cities; ³⁸ and out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer,

Mahana'im with its pasture lands, ³⁹ Heshbon with its pasture lands, Jazer with its pasture lands—four cities in all. ⁴⁰ As for the cities of the several Merar'ite families, that is, the remainder of the families of the Levites, those allotted to them were in all twelve cities.

⁴¹ The cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the people of Israel were in all forty-eight cities with their pasture lands. ⁴² These cities had each its pasture lands round about it; so it was with all these cities.

⁴³ Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land which he swore to give to their fathers; and having taken possession of it, they settled there. ⁴⁴ And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers; not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. ⁴⁵ Not one of all the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

22 Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas'seh, ² and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I have commanded you; ³ you have not forsaken your brethren these many days, down to this day, but have been careful to keep the charge of the LORD your God. ⁴ And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as he promised them; therefore turn and go to your home in the land where your possession lies, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. ⁵ Take good care to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave to him, and to serve him

21.43–22.34: The Transjordanian tribes return. The conquest of western Palestine now complete (21.43–45), the two and one-half tribes are set free to go back to their own lands east of

with all your heart and with all your soul.”⁶ So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away; and they went to their homes.

7 Now to the one half of the tribe of Manas’sseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan; but to the other half Joshua had given a possession beside their brethren in the land west of the Jordan. And when Joshua sent them away to their homes and blessed them,⁸ he said to them, “Go back to your homes with much wealth, and with very many cattle, with silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and with much clothing; divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.”⁹ So the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas’sseh returned home, parting from the people of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, their own land of which they had possessed themselves by command of the LORD through Moses.

10 And when they came to the region about the Jordan, that lies in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas’sseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of great size.¹¹ And the people of Israel heard say, “Behold, the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas’sseh have built an altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the people of Israel.”¹² And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole assembly of the people of Israel gathered at Shiloh, to make war against them.

13 Then the people of Israel sent to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas’sseh, in the land of Gilead, Phin’ehas the son of Elea’zar the priest,¹⁴ and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribal

families of Israel, every one of them the head of a family among the clans of Israel.¹⁵ And they came to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas’sseh, in the land of Gilead, and they said to them,¹⁶ “Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD, ‘What is this treachery which you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away this day from following the LORD, by building yourselves an altar this day in rebellion against the LORD?’¹⁷ Have we not had enough of the sin at Pe’or from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of the LORD,¹⁸ that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And if you rebel against the LORD today he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel tomorrow.¹⁹ But now, if your land is unclean, pass over into the LORD’s land where the LORD’s tabernacle stands, and take for yourselves a possession among us; only do not rebel against the LORD, or make us as rebels by building yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God.²⁰ Did not Achan the son of Zerah break faith in the matter of the devoted things, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? And he did not perish alone for his iniquity.’”

21 Then the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas’sseh said in answer to the heads of the families of Israel,²² “The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows; and let Israel itself know! If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith toward the LORD, spare us not today²³ for building an altar to turn away from following the LORD; or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or cereal offerings or peace offerings on it, may the LORD himself

the Jordan (1.12–18). **22.10:** *The land of Canaan* is, strictly, the land west of the Jordan. **12:** Holding strictly to the Deuteronomic law which forbade the offering of sacrifice anywhere except in the one central sanctuary (Dt.12.13,14), the other tribes apparently interpret the building of the altar as an act of disloyalty to Israel and its God, and therefore prepare *to make war against them*. **17:** *The sin at Peor*, Num.25.3–5. **20:** *Achan*, 7.1. **26–27:** It was not a real altar, but merely a memorial, *a witness*.

take vengeance. ²⁴ Nay, but we did it from fear that in time to come your children might say to our children, 'What have you to do with the LORD, the God of Israel?' ²⁵ For the LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you Reubenites and Gadites; you have no portion in the LORD.' So your children might make our children cease to worship the LORD. ²⁶ Therefore we said, 'Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, ²⁷ but to be a witness between us and you, and between the generations after us, that we do perform the service of the LORD in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and peace offerings; lest your children say to our children in time to come, "You have no portion in the LORD." ' ²⁸ And we thought, If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we should say, 'Behold the copy of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.' ²⁹ Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn away this day from following the LORD by building an altar for burnt offering, cereal offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the LORD our God that stands before his tabernacle!"

³⁰ When Phin'ehas the priest and the chiefs of the congregation, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Manas'sites spoke, it pleased them well. ³¹ And Phin'ehas the son of Elea'zar the priest said to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Manas'sites, "Today we know that the LORD is in the midst of us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD; now you have saved the people of Israel from the hand of the LORD."

³² Then Phin'ehas the son of Elea'zar the priest, and the chiefs, returned from the Reubenites and the Gadites in the land of Gilead to the land of Ca-

naan, to the people of Israel, and brought back word to them. ³³ And the report pleased the people of Israel; and the people of Israel blessed God and spoke no more of making war against them, to destroy the land where the Reubenites and the Gadites were settled. ³⁴ The Reubenites and the Gadites called the altar Witness; "For," said they, "it is a witness between us that the LORD is God."

23 A long time afterward, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, ² Joshua summoned all Israel, their elders and heads, their judges and officers, and said to them, "I am now old and well advanced in years; ³ and you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the LORD your God who has fought for you. ⁴ Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. ⁵ The LORD your God will push them back before you, and drive them out of your sight; and you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. ⁶ Therefore be very steadfast to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, ⁷ that you may not be mixed with these nations left here among you, or make mention of the names of their gods, or swear by them, or serve them, or bow down yourselves to them, ⁸ but cleave to the LORD your God as you have done to this day. ⁹ For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations; and as for you, no man has been able to withstand you to this day. ¹⁰ One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, as he promised you. ¹¹ Take good heed to yourselves, there-

fore, to love the LORD your God. ¹² For if you turn back, and join the remnant of these nations left here among you, and make marriages with them, so that you marry their women and they yours, ¹³ know assuredly that the LORD your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you; but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, till you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

14 "And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed. ¹⁵ But just as all the good things which the LORD your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you, ¹⁶ if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land which he has given to you."

24 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ² And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. ³ Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many.

I gave him Isaac; ⁴ and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Se'ir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. ⁵ And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it; and afterwards I brought you out. ⁶ Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. ⁷ And when they cried to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did to Egypt; and you lived in the wilderness a long time. ⁸ Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. ⁹ Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel; and he sent and invited Balaam the son of Be'or to curse you, ¹⁰ but I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he blessed you; so I delivered you out of his hand. ¹¹ And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the men of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Gir'-gashites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'-usites; and I gave them into your hand. ¹² And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow. ¹³ I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you dwell therein; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards which you did not plant."

14 "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your

24.1-28: The covenant at Shechem. The generation which had conquered Palestine now takes upon itself a covenant with the LORD similar to that which their fathers had entered into at Sinai (Ex.24.7-18; 34.27-28; compare Jos.8.30-35). **1:** *Shechem*, see 8.30 n. **12:** The term *hornet* is used metaphorically, possibly referring to the panic which befell the inhabitants (2.11;

fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ And if you be unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

¹⁶ Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; ¹⁸ and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land; therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

¹⁹ But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." ²¹ And the people said to Joshua, "Nay; but we will serve the LORD." ²² Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." ²³ He said, "Then put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel." ²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey."

²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem. ²⁶ And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of the LORD which he spoke to us; therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God." ²⁸ So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

²⁹ After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being a hundred and ten years old. ³⁰ And they buried him in his own inheritance at Tim'nath-se'rah, which is in the hill country of E'phraim, north of the mountain of Ga'ash.

³¹ And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work which the LORD did for Israel.

³² The bones of Joseph which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money;^a it became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph.

³³ And Elea'zar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gib'e-ah, the town of Phin'ehas his son, which had been given him in the hill country of E'phraim.

q Heb qesitah

10.1-2; Dt.2.25). **25:** The Canaanite god worshiped at Shechem was called Baal-, or El-Berith, "god of the covenant" (Jg.9.4,46). The city thus had covenant associations for the Canaanites as well as the Israelites. **26:** Sacred trees are frequently connected with ancient sanctuaries (Gen.12.6; 13.18; 35.4,8; Jg.9.6), as are stone pillars (Gen.28.18; Ex.24.4; Jg.9.6). **29-31:** The death and burial of Joshua. **30:** *Timnath-serah*, see 19.49-50. **32-33:** The burial of Joseph and Eleazar. **32:** *Brought up from Egypt*, Ex.13.19. *Which Jacob bought*, Gen.33.19.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Despite the optimistic report in the book of Joshua that Israel conquered Palestine in a brief series of campaigns under a single leader, it is evident from the book of Judges that the process was not quite so simple. Chapter 1 says plainly that many parts of the country were never subjugated, while the rest of the book is largely an account of battles which had to be fought through several generations before the land was securely in Israel's hands. The enthralling tales the book contains are traditions preserved by various tribes about the exploits of their particular heroes—the "judges" of whom the title speaks. An editor has given the tales a factitious unity by making all the judges national, instead of tribal leaders and by providing for all the events a moral and theological interpretation.

The book opens (1.1–2.5) with an account of the conquest of Canaan which is roughly parallel to that in the book of Joshua; then follows the main body of the work which, after a moralizing introduction (2.6–3.6), relates the adventures of the individual judges: Othniel (3.7–11); Ehud (3.12–30); Shamgar (3.31); Deborah (chs. 4–5); Gideon (chs. 6–8) and his infamous son, Abimelech (ch. 9); two minor judges (10.1–5); Jephthah (10.6–12.7); three more minor judges (12.8–15); and Samson (chs. 13–16). It concludes with an appendix containing tales about the migration of Dan (chs. 17–18) and the sins of the Benjaminites (chs. 19–21). While the final editor of the book was undoubtedly concerned to preserve intact these colorful stories of his people's early life in the Promised Land, he was even more concerned with the moral lesson which, with single-minded diligence, he endeavors to extract from them—the lesson that loyalty to God is the first requisite for national success and disloyalty a guarantee of disaster. In its present form the book is a set of illustrative variations on this theme, a theme which appears in classical form in the hortatory sections of Deuteronomy, and especially in Dt. ch. 28.

AFTER THE DEATH OF JOSHUA THE people of Israel inquired of the LORD, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?" ²The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand." ³And Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you." So Simeon went with him. ⁴Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Per'izzites into their hand; and they defeated ten thousand of them at Bezek. ⁵They came upon Ado'ni-be'zek at Bezek, and fought against him, and defeated

the Canaanites and the Per'izzites. ⁶Ado'ni-be'zek fled; but they pursued him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. ⁷And Ado'ni-be'zek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and their great toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has requited me." And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

⁸And the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire. ⁹And afterward the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the hill country, in the Negeb, and in the lowland. ¹⁰And Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in

1.1-2.5: Israel's incomplete conquest of the land. This seems to be an older account of the Israelite invasion than the one in Joshua. **1-21:** The conquests of Judah (compare Jos. ch. 15). **1:** The words *after the death of Joshua* contradict the general tenor of the following narrative and are probably an editor's harmonizing note. They *inquired of the LORD* by consulting the sacred lots. **3:** The tribe of *Simeon* plays no significant role in the later history of Israel. Not mentioned in the Song of Deborah (5.2-31), it was probably entirely absorbed by Judah at an early day. **4:** The location of *Bezek* is uncertain. **8:** Jerusalem was not actually captured until the time of David (2 Sam.5.6-7). **10:** Hebron was the most important city of southern

Hebron (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kir'iath-ar'ba); and they defeated She'shai and Ahi'man and Talmai.

11 From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. The name of Debir was formerly Kir'iath-se'pher.¹² And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kir'iath-se'pher and takes it, I will give him Achsah my daughter as wife."

¹³ And Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.¹⁴ When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field; and she alighted from her ass, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

¹⁵ She said to him, "Give me a present; since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

16 And the descendants of the Ken'ite, Moses' father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad; and they went and settled with the people.¹⁷ And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they defeated the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah.¹⁸ Judah also took Gaza with its territory, and Ash'kelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.¹⁹ And the LORD was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain, because they had chariots of iron.²⁰ And Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said; and he drove out from it the three sons of Anak.²¹ But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jeb'usites who

dwelt in Jerusalem; so the Jeb'usites have dwelt with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

22 The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel; and the LORD was with them.²³ And the house of Joseph sent to spy out Bethel. (Now the name of the city was formerly Luz.)²⁴ And the spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, "Pray, show us the way into the city, and we will deal kindly with you."²⁵ And he showed them the way into the city; and they smote the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go.²⁶ And the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city, and called its name Luz; that is its name to this day.

27 Manas'seh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-she'an and its villages, or Ta'anach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megid'do and its villages; but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land.²⁸ When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

29 And E'phraim did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Na'halol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became subject to forced labor.

31 Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob;³² but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the

Palestine; its capture is also reported in Jos.10.36-37. According to v. 20 and Jos.14.13-15 it was given to the clan of Caleb. 11-15: This story is found almost verbatim in Jos.15.13-19. 11: *Debir* is probably the modern Tell Beit Mirsim, southwest of Hebron. 16: The Kenites were a nomadic tribe closely allied to the Hebrews. *The city of palms* was either Jericho (as in 3.13) or a city of the Negeb. 18: *Gaza* . . . *Ashkelon* . . . *Ekron* were three of the five cities of the Philistine confederation (see 14.19 n.). The account of their capture is almost certainly unhistorical; the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) says specifically that Judah "did not" take them. 22-29: The conquests of the Joseph tribes (compare Jos. chs. 16-17). 30-36: The

land; for they did not drive them out.

33 Naph'tali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-she'mesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-she'mesh and of Beth-anath became subject to forced labor for them.

34 The Amorites pressed the Danites back into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the plain; ³⁵ the Amorites persisted in dwelling in Har-heres, in Ai'jalon, and in Sha-al'bim, but the hand of the house of Joseph rested heavily upon them, and they became subject to forced labor. ³⁶ And the border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Ak-rab'bim, from Sela and upward.

Q Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you into the land which I swore to give to your fathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.' But you have not obeyed my command. What is this you have done? ³ So now I say, I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become adversaries^a to you, and their gods shall be a snare to you." ⁴ When the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵ And they called the name of that place Bochim;^b and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

6 When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the

land. ⁷ And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work which the LORD had done for Israel. ⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten years. ⁹ And they buried him within the bounds of his inheritance in Tim'nath-he'res, in the hill country of E'phraim, north of the mountain of Ga'ash. ¹⁰ And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, who did not know the LORD or the work which he had done for Israel.

11 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Ba'als; ¹² and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were round about them, and bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They forsook the LORD, and served the Ba'als and the Ash'taroth. ¹⁴ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them; and he sold them into the power of their enemies round about, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. ¹⁵ Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them; and they were in sore straits.

16 Then the LORD raised up judges,

^a Vg Old Latin Compare Gk: Heb *sides*

^b That is *Weepers*

conquests of the Galilee tribes (Jos.18-19). The emphasis in this section (as in vv. 19,21 and 27-29) is on the incompleteness of the result. **2.1-5:** The moral reason for Israel's relative failure. **1:** *The angel of the LORD* is God in his self-manifestation, as the following words clearly show. *Bochim* is probably Bethel; the word means literally "weepers" (vv. 4-5).

2.6-3.6: *Moralizing introduction to the book.* An editor explains that the whole history of these times is to be understood in terms of constantly recurring cycles of national apostasy, enslavement, repentance, and deliverance (vv. 16-20). He wishes his readers to understand that the history he is about to relate teaches the lesson that Israel was prosperous and free only when she was loyal to her God. **8:** Joshua's death is related also in Jos.24.29-31. **13:** *Baals and the Ashtaroth* were the male and female gods of the Canaanites. **16:** *The judges* of this book

who saved them out of the power of those who plundered them.¹⁷ And yet they did not listen to their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed down to them; they soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so.¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.¹⁹ But whenever the judge died, they turned back and behaved worse than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them; they did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.²⁰ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; and he said, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not obeyed my voice,²¹ I will not henceforth drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died,²² that by them I may test Israel, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not."²³ So the LORD left those nations, not driving them out at once, and he did not give them into the power of Joshua.

3 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had no experience of any war in Canaan; ² it was only that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, that he might teach war to such at least as had not known it before. ³ These are the nations: the five lords of the Philis-

tines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sido'nians, and the Hivites who dwelt on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Ba'al-her'mon as far as the entrance of Hamath. ⁴ They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by Moses. ⁵ So the people of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites; ⁶ and they took their daughters to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons; and they served their gods.

7 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and serving the Ba'als and the Ashe'roth.

⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cu'shan-rishatha'im king of Mesopota'mia; and the people of Israel served Cu'shan-rishatha'im eight years. ⁹ But when the people of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who delivered them, Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD gave Cu'shan-rishatha'im king of Mesopota'mia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cu'shan-rishatha'im.

¹¹ So the land had rest forty years. Then Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz died.

12 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹³ He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the

were military heroes who, for their services, were entrusted with the powers of government during their own lifetime.

3.7-11: Othniel. The story is a vague one; Othniel's true place seems to be in 1.12,13. **8:** *Cushan-rishathaim* is unknown elsewhere. **10:** *The Spirit of the LORD came upon him*, a divinely inspired wrath may be suggested here; compare 11.29. **11:** A type of editorial formula which occurs repeatedly in the book (e.g. v. 30; 5.31).

3.12-30: Ehud. The people, chiefly the tribe of Benjamin, when enslaved by the Moabites, were delivered by a Benjaminite hero. **12:** *Moab*, the country immediately east of the Dead

Amal'ekites, and went and defeated Israel; and they took possession of the city of palms. ¹⁴ And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

¹⁵ But when the people of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab. ¹⁶ And Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length; and he girded it on his right thigh under his clothes. ¹⁷ And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. ¹⁸ And when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people that carried the tribute. ¹⁹ But he himself turned back at the sculptured stones near Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." And he commanded, "Silence." And all his attendants went out from his presence.

²⁰ And Ehud came to him, as he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber. And Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." And he arose from his seat. ²¹ And Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly; ²² and the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out of his belly; and the dirt came out. ²³ Then Ehud went out into the vestibule,^c and closed the doors of the roof chamber upon him, and locked them.

²⁴ When he had gone, the servants came; and when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, "He is only relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber." ²⁵ And they waited till they were ut-

terly at a loss; but when he still did not open the doors of the roof chamber, they took the key and opened them; and there lay their lord dead on the floor.

²⁶ Ehud escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the sculptured stones, and escaped to Se-i'rah. ²⁷ When he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of E'phraim; and the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country, having him at their head. ²⁸ And he said to them, "Follow after me; for the LORD has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites, and allowed not a man to pass over. ²⁹ And they killed at that time about ten thousand of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; not a man escaped. ³⁰ So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

³¹ After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred of the Philistines with an oxgoad; and he too delivered Israel.

4 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. ² And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sis'era, who dwelt in Haro'sheth-ha-goiim. ³ Then the people of Israel cried to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

⁴ Now Deb'orah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapp'idoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ She used to sit under the palm of Deb'orah between

^c The meaning of the Hebrew word is unknown

Sea. **13:** *The city of palms*, Jericho. **19:** *Stones near Gilgal*, compare Jos.4.20. **31:** *Shamgar*, a fragment of a story. *The Philistines*, see 13.1 n.

4.1-5.31: *Deborah*. The story of Deborah and Barak's victories over the Canaanites of the North is told in two versions, one in prose (ch. 4), the other in poetry (ch. 5). **4.2:** King *Jabin* plays a similar role in Jos.11.1. *Hazor* was one of the most important Canaanite cities of Galilee (see Jos.11.1 n.). **3:** The *chariots of iron* gave the Canaanites a great advantage over the Hebrews who were as yet unfamiliar with the art of working in iron (Jos.17.16; 1 Sam.13.19-22). **4:** *Judging* means "ruling." **6:** *Mount Tabor* is in Galilee north of the plain of Esdraelon. **7:** *The*

Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of E'phraim; and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶ She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abin'o-am from Kedesh in Naph'tali, and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naph'tali and the tribe of Zeb'ulun. ⁷ And I will draw out Sis'era, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'"⁸ Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go."⁹ And she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sis'era into the hand of a woman." Then Deb'orah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ And Barak summoned Zeb'ulun and Naph'tali to Kedesh; and ten thousand men went up at his heels; and Deb'orah went up with him.

¹¹ Now Heber the Ken'ite had separated from the Ken'ites, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Za-anan'nim, which is near Kedesh.

¹² When Sis'era was told that Barak the son of Abin'o-am had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³ Sis'era called out all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Haro'sheth-ha-goiim to the river Kishon. ¹⁴ And Deb'orah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sis'era into your hand. Does not the LORD go out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵ And the LORD routed Sis'era and all his chariots and all his army before Barak at the edge of the

sword; and Sis'era alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. ¹⁶ And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Haro'sheth-ha-goiim, and all the army of Sis'era fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

¹⁷ But Sis'era fled away on foot to the tent of Ja'el, the wife of Heber the Ken'ite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Ken'ite. ¹⁸ And Ja'el came out to meet Sis'era, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear." So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. ¹⁹ And he said to her, "Pray, give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty." So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. ²⁰ And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, 'Is any one here?' say, No."²¹ But Ja'el the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, till it went down into the ground, as he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died. ²² And behold, as Barak pursued Sis'era, Ja'el went out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." So he went in to her tent; and there lay Sis'era dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

²³ So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel. ²⁴ And the hand of the people of Israel bore harder and harder on Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

5 Then sang Deb'orah and Barak the son of Abin'o-am on that day:
² "That the leaders took the lead in

Israel,
 that the people offered themselves willingly,

river Kishon is a small stream which flows westward through the plain of Esdraelon, north of Mount Carmel. **10:** *Zebulun and Naphtali* were two of the Galilean tribes (1.30,33). **11:** *The Kenites*, see 1.16 n. **5.1:** *Sang Deborah*. Verse 7 shows the song was composed about Deborah, not by her. This so-called "Song of Deborah" is the oldest remaining considerable fragment of Hebrew literature. The Hebrew text is, unfortunately, so corrupt in some places as to be almost

bless^d the LORD!

the people of the LORD.

³ "Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes;
to the LORD I will sing,
I will make melody to the
LORD, the God of Israel.

⁴ "LORD, when thou didst go forth
from Se'ir,
when thou didst march from the
region of Edom,
the earth trembled,
and the heavens dropped,
yea, the clouds dropped water.

⁵ The mountains quaked before the
LORD,
yon Sinai before the LORD, the
God of Israel.

⁶ "In the days of Shamgar, son of
Anath,
in the days of Ja'el, caravans
ceased
and travelers kept to the byways.

⁷ The peasantry ceased in Israel, they
ceased
until you arose, Deb'orah,
arose as a mother in Israel.

⁸ When new gods were chosen,
then war was in the gates.
Was shield or spear to be seen
among forty thousand in Israel?

⁹ My heart goes out to the
commanders of Israel
who offered themselves willingly
among the people.
Bless the LORD.

¹⁰ "Tell of it, you who ride on tawny
asses,
you who sit on rich carpets^e
and you who walk by the way.

¹¹ To the sound of musicians^e at the
watering places,
there they repeat the triumphs of
the LORD,
the triumphs of his peasantry in
Israel.

"Then down to the gates marched

¹² "Awake, awake, Deb'orah!
Awake, awake, utter a song!
Arise, Barak, lead away your
captives,
O son of Abin'o-am.

¹³ Then down marched the remnant
of the noble;
the people of the LORD marched
down for him' against the
mighty.

¹⁴ From E'phraim they set out thither^x
into the valley,^g
following you, Benjamin, with
your kinsmen;
from Machir marched down the
commanders,
and from Zeb'ulun those who bear
the marshal's staff;

¹⁵ the princes of Is'sachar came with
Deb'orah,
and Is'sachar faithful to Barak;
into the valley they rushed forth
at his heels.

Among the clans of Reuben
there were great searchings of
heart.

¹⁶ Why did you tarry among the
sheepfolds,
to hear the piping for the flocks?
Among the clans of Reuben
there were great searchings of
heart.

¹⁷ Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan;
and Dan, why did he abide with
the ships?

Asher sat still at the coast of the sea,
settling down by his landings.

¹⁸ Zeb'ulun is a people that jeopardized
their lives to the death;
Naph'tali too, on the heights of
the field.

¹⁹ "The kings came, they fought;
then fought the kings of Canaan,

*d Or You who offered yourselves willingly among the
people, bless*

e The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

f Gk: Heb me

x Cn: Heb From Ephraim their root

g Gk: Heb in Amalek

unintelligible. 4: From Seir . . . Edom. The LORD is pictured coming from the region southeast of the Dead Sea to help his people. 6: That the caravans ceased is a detail pointing to the near anarchy of the times. 15-17: The far away tribes Reuben . . . Gilead (Gad) . . . Dan . . . Asher

- at Ta'anach, by the waters of
Megid'do;
they got no spoils of silver.
20 From heaven fought the stars,
from their courses they fought
against Sis'era.
21 The torrent Kishon swept them
away,
the onrushing torrent, the
torrent Kishon.
March on, my soul, with might!
- 22 "Then loud beat the horses' hoofs
with the galloping, galloping of
his steeds.
- 23 "Curse Meroz, says the angel of the
LORD,
curse bitterly its inhabitants,
because they came not to the help
of the LORD,
to the help of the LORD against the
mighty.
- 24 "Most blessed of women be Ja'el,
the wife of Heber the Ken'ite,
of tent-dwelling women most
blessed.
- 25 He asked water and she gave him
milk,
she brought him curds in a lordly
bowl.
- 26 She put her hand to the tent peg
and her right hand to the
workmen's mallet;
she struck Sis'era a blow,
she crushed his head,
she shattered and pierced his
temple.
- 27 He sank, he fell,
he lay still at her feet;
at her feet he sank, he fell;
where he sank, there he fell
dead.

- 28 "Out of the window she peered,
the mother of Sis'era gazed^h
through the lattice:
'Why is his chariot so long in
coming?
Why tarry the hoofbeats of his
chariots?'
- 29 Her wisest ladies make answer,
nay, she gives answer to herself,
30 'Are they not finding and dividing
the spoil?—
A maiden or two for every man;
spoil of dyed stuffs for Sis'era,
spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,
two pieces of dyed work
embroidered for my neck
as spoil?'
- 31 "So perish all thine enemies,
O LORD!
But thy friends be like the sun as
he rises in his might."

And the land had rest for forty years.

6 The people of Israel did what was
evil in the sight of the LORD; and
the LORD gave them into the hand of
Mid'ian seven years. ² And the hand
of Mid'ian prevailed over Israel; and
because of Mid'ian the people of Israel
made for themselves the dens which
are in the mountains, and the caves and
the strongholds. ³ For whenever the
Israelites put in seed the Mid'ianites
and the Amal'ekites and the people
of the East would come up and attack
them; ⁴ they would encamp against
them and destroy the produce of the
land, as far as the neighborhood of
Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel,
and no sheep or ox or ass. ⁵ For they
would come up with their cattle and
their tents, coming like locusts for

^h Gk Compare Tg: Heb *exclaimed*

took no part in the battle. Judah, Simeon, and Levi are not even mentioned. 19: *Taanach* . . . *Megiddo* were two important fortresses guarding the northern approaches to the passes through Mount Carmel. 21: The flooding waters of the Kishon bogged down the Canaanite chariots. 23: *Meroz* was apparently a nearby Israelite village which refused to take part in the battle. 24-27: In 4.17-22 *Jaël* kills Sisera while he is asleep; here he is struck down while standing. 28-31: The ancient bard masterfully concludes the account of Sisera's defeat with an impressionistic glimpse of his anxious mother waiting for his return.

6.1-8.35: Gideon. A hero of the tribe of Manasseh drives out the invading Midianites. 6.1-6: Israel's plight. 3: *The Midianites* . . . *the people of the East* were nomadic raiders, like

number; both they and their camels could not be counted; so that they wasted the land as they came in. ⁶ And Israel was brought very low because of Mid'ian; and the people of Israel cried for help to the LORD.

7 When the people of Israel cried to the LORD on account of the Mid'ianites, ⁸ the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel; and he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt, and brought you out of the house of bondage; ⁹ and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you, and gave you their land; ¹⁰ and I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; you shall not pay reverence to the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.' But you have not given heed to my voice."

11 Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to Jo'ash the Abiez'rite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide it from the Mid'ianites. ¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor." ¹³ And Gideon said to him, "Pray, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this befallen us? And where are all his wonderful deeds which our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Mid'ian." ¹⁴ And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Mid'ian; do not I send you?" ¹⁵ And he said to him, "Pray, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manas'sch, and I am the least in my family." ¹⁶ And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall smite the Mid'ianites as

one man." ¹⁷ And he said to him, "If now I have found favor with thee, then show me a sign that it is thou who speakest with me. ¹⁸ Do not depart from here, I pray thee, until I come to thee, and bring out my present, and set it before thee." And he said, "I will stay till you return."

19 So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the oak and presented them. ²⁰ And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them." And he did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and there sprang up fire from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. ²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD; and Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." ²³ But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die." ²⁴ Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it, The LORD is peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiez'rites.

25 That night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull, the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Ba'al which your father has, and cut down the Ashe'rah that is beside it; ²⁶ and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order; then take the second bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Ashe'rah which you shall cut down." ²⁷ So Gideon took ten men

the Hebrews of an earlier day and the Arab bedouins of a later. 7-24: In response to the people's cry for help, Gideon is called to save them. 11: *The angel of the LORD*, see 2.1 n. An Abiezrite was a member of the small (v. 15) Manassite clan of Abiezer. He was *beating out wheat in the wine press* instead of doing it in the usual exposed position on a hill top. 25-32: Gideon destroys the altar of Baal. 25: *The Asherah* was probably a wooden pole representing a goddess. 32: The

of his servants, and did as the LORD had told him; but because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

28 When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Ba'al was broken down, and the Ashe'rah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered upon the altar which had been built. 29 And they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And after they had made search and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Jo'ash has done this thing." 30 Then the men of the town said to Jo'ash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Ba'al and cut down the Ashe'rah beside it." 31 But Jo'ash said to all who were arrayed against him, "Will you contend for Ba'al? Or will you defend his cause? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down." 32 Therefore on that day he was called Jerubba'al, that is to say, "Let Ba'al contend against him," because he pulled down his altar.

33 Then all the Mid'ianites and the Amal'ekites and the people of the East came together, and crossing the Jordan they encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the LORD took possession of Gideon; and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiez'rites were called out to follow him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manas'seh; and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zeb'ulun, and Naph'tali; and they went up to meet them.

36 Then Gideon said to God, "If thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, 37 behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as thou hast said." 38 And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Let not thy anger burn against me, let me speak but this once; pray, let me make trial only this once with the fleece; pray, let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew." 40 And God did so that night; for it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

7 Then Jerubba'al (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Mid'ian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Mid'ianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, 'My own hand has delivered me.' 3 Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home.'" And Gideon tested them;ⁱ twenty-two thousand returned, and ten thousand remained.

4 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; take them down to the water and I will test them for you there; and he of whom I say to you, 'This man shall go with

ⁱ Cn: Heb and depart from Mount Gilead

explanation given of the name *Jerubbaal* is not the natural one; the bearer of such a name was certainly a worshiper of Baal, not an antagonist. Numerous other difficulties and inconsistencies in the Gideon stories are evidence that accounts from several different sources have been imperfectly fused. The whole "Jerubbaal" incident (vv. 25-32) is unrelated either to what precedes or what follows. 33-40: He prepares to attack the Midianites. 33: *The Valley of Jezreel*, the eastern end of the valley of Esdraelon, in the north of Palestine. 34: *The Spirit of the LORD*, see 3.10 n. 7.1-23: Gideon puts the Midianites to flight. 4-7: The test, described in somewhat confusing fashion in these verses, is merely an arbitrary device for reducing the number of Gideon's warriors in order to enhance the miraculous character of the deliverance which follows. No

you,' shall go with you; and any of whom I say to you, 'This man shall not go with you,' shall not go."⁵ So he brought the people down to the water; and the LORD said to Gideon, "Every one that laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself; likewise every one that kneels down to drink."⁶ And the number of those that lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water.⁷ And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will deliver you, and give the Mid'ianites into your hand; and let all the others go every man to his home."⁸ So he took the jars of the people from their hands,^j and their trumpets; and he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the three hundred men; and the camp of Mid'ian was below him in the valley.

9 That same night the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp; for I have given it into your hand.¹⁰ But if you fear to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant;¹¹ and you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men that were in the camp.¹² And the Mid'ianites and the Amal'ekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand which is upon the seashore for multitude.¹³ When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade; and he said, "Behold, I dreamed a dream; and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Mid'ian, and came to the tent, and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat."¹⁴ And his comrade answered, "This is no other than the

sword of Gideon the son of Jo'ash, a man of Israel; into his hand God has given Mid'ian and all the host."

15 When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped; and he returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise; for the LORD has given the host of Mid'ian into your hand."¹⁶ And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars.¹⁷ And he said to them, "Look at me, and do likewise; when I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do."¹⁸ When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands.²⁰ And the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars, holding in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow; and they cried, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"²¹ They stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the army ran; they cried out and fled.²² When they blew the three hundred trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow and against all the army; and the army fled as far as Beth-shit'tah toward Zer'erah,^k as far as the border of A'bel-meho'lah, by Tab-bath.²³ And the men of Israel were called out from Naph'tali and from Asher and from all Manas'seh, and they pursued after Mid'ian.

24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of

j Cn: Heb the people took provisions in their hands
k Another reading is Zeredah

principle of discrimination, such as would separate the brave from the cowardly or the watchful from the careless, is involved. **13:** *Barley bread* represents the Israelite farmers; *the tent*, the nomadic Midianites. **7.24-8.3:** Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite chieftains, are captured and

E'phraim, saying, "Come down against the Mid'ianites and seize the waters against them, as far as Beth-bar'ah, and also the Jordan." So all the men of E'phraim were called out, and they seized the waters as far as Beth-bar'ah, and also the Jordan. ²⁵ And they took the two princes of Mid'ian, Oreb and Zeeb; they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the wine press of Zeeb, as they pursued Mid'ian; and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon beyond the Jordan.

8 And the men of E'phraim said to him, "What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight with Mid'ian?" And they upbraided him violently. ² And he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the glean- ing of the grapes of E'phraim better than the vintage of Abi-e'zer?" ³ God has given into your hands the princes of Mid'ian, Oreb and Zeeb; what have I been able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger against him was abated, when he had said this.

4 And Gideon came to the Jordan and passed over, he and the three hun- dred men who were with him, faint yet pursuing. ⁵ So he said to the men of Succoth, "Pray, give loaves of bread to the people who follow me; for they are faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmun'na, the kings of Mid'ian." ⁶ And the officials of Suc- coth said, "Are Zebah and Zalmun'na already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?" ⁷ And Gideon said, "Well then, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmun'na into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with

briers." ⁸ And from there he went up to Penu'el, and spoke to them in the same way; and the men of Penu'el an- swered him as the men of Succoth had answered. ⁹ And he said to the men of Penu'el, "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower."

10 Now Zebah and Zalmun'na were in Karkor with their army, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for there had fallen a hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword. ¹¹ And Gideon went up by the caravan route east of Nobah and Jog'behah, and attacked the army; for the army was off its guard. ¹² And Zebah and Zalmun'na fled; and he pursued them and took the two kings of Mid'ian, Zebah and Zalmun'na, and he threw all the army into a panic.

13 Then Gideon the son of Jo'ash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres. ¹⁴ And he caught a young man of Succoth, and questioned him; and he wrote down for him the officials and elders of Succoth, seventy-seven men. ¹⁵ And he came to the men of Succoth, and said, "Behold Zebah and Zalmun'na, about whom you taunted me, saying, 'Are Zebah and Zalmun'na already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are faint?'" ¹⁶ And he took the elders of the city and he took thorns of the wilder- ness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth. ¹⁷ And he broke down the tower of Penu'el, and slew the men of the city.

18 Then he said to Zebah and Zalmun'na, "Where are the men whom you slew at Tabor?" They answered, "As you are, so were they, every one

executed by the tribe of Ephraim. **8.2-3:** Gideon appeases the anger of the Ephraimites at not being summoned sooner by telling them that their final accomplishment (*the glean- ing of the grapes*) was greater than the whole previous *vintage of Abiezer*. **4-17:** Gideon continues to pursue the Midianites eastward and kills their chieftains Zebah and Zalmunna. This sounds like a parallel version of the events described in 7.24-8.3 (in the earlier passage the pursuit and capture of the Midianite princes, Oreb and Zeeb; here the pursuit and capture of the Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna). **5:** *Succoth* and the other places mentioned in this section are all east of the Jordan. **18-19:** These verses indicate that Gideon's motives were not merely religious or patriotic, but personal. The original beginning of the story must have recorded the death of Gideon's brothers at the hands of the Midianites and his resolve, as their next of kin, to avenge

of them; they resembled the sons of a king." ¹⁹ And he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother; as the LORD lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not slay you."

²⁰ And he said to Jether his first-born, "Rise, and slay them." But the youth did not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. ²¹ Then Zebah and Zalmun'na said, "Rise yourself, and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength." And Gideon arose and slew Zebah and Zalmun'na; and he took the crescents that were on the necks of their camels.

²² Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also; for you have delivered us out of the hand of Mid'ian." ²³ Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you." ²⁴ And Gideon said to them, "Let me make a request of you; give me every man of you the earrings of his spoil." (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ish'maelites.)

²⁵ And they answered, "We will willingly give them." And they spread a garment, and every man cast in it the earrings of his spoil. ²⁶ And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold; besides the crescents and the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Mid'ian, and besides the collars that were about the necks of their camels. ²⁷ And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah; and all Israel played the harlot after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. ²⁸ So Mid'ian was subdued before the people of Israel,

and they lifted up their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.

²⁹ Jerubba'al the son of Jo'ash went and dwelt in his own house. ³⁰ Now Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, for he had many wives. ³¹ And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name Abim'elech. ³² And Gideon the son of Jo'ash died in a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Jo'ash his father, at Ophrah of the Abiez'rites.

³³ As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and played the harlot after the Ba'als, and made Ba'al-be'rith their god. ³⁴ And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies on every side; ³⁵ and they did not show kindness to the family of Jerubba'al (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.

⁹ Now Abim'elech the son of Jerubba'al went to Shechem to his mother's kinsmen and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, ² "Say in the ears of all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubba'al rule over you, or that one rule over you?' Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh." ³ And his mother's kinsmen spoke all these words on his behalf in the ears of all the men of Shechem; and their hearts inclined to follow Abim'elech, for they said, "He is our brother." ⁴ And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Ba'al-be'rith with which Abim'elech hired worthless and

them (compare Jos.20.3). **22-23:** Gideon refuses an offer of hereditary kingship. **24-28:** He makes an ephod (probably some kind of image) out of the spoil of the Midianites. **29-32:** Gideon's family and his death. **33-35:** Israel's renewed apostasy.

9.1-57: Abimelech. Gideon's half-Canaanite son comes to a disastrous end when he tries to make himself king. **1-6:** Abimelech becomes king. **1:** *Jerubbaal*, see 6.32 n. *Shechem*, the most important city and sanctuary in north central Palestine. It guarded the important east and west highway which passed between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. **4:** *Baal-berith*, "the lord of the covenant," was the god of Shechem. It is perhaps significant that the Israelites entered into a covenant with the LORD at Shechem (Jos.24.1-27), where there is this evidence of Canaanite

reckless fellows, who followed him.

⁵ And he went to his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brothers the sons of Jerubba'al, seventy men, upon one stone; but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubba'al was left, for he hid himself.

⁶ And all the citizens of Shechem came together, and all Beth-millo, and they went and made Abim'elech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.

⁷ When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Ger'izim, and cried aloud and said to them, "Listen to me, you men of Shechem, that God may listen to you.

⁸ The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' ⁹ But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my fatness, by which gods and men are honored, and go to sway over the trees?' ¹⁰ And the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come you, and reign over us.'

¹¹ But the fig tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to sway over the trees?' ¹² And the trees said to the vine, 'Come you, and reign over us.' ¹³ But the vine said to them, 'Shall I leave my wine which cheers gods and men, and go to sway over the trees?' ¹⁴ Then all the trees said to the bramble, 'Come you, and reign over us.' ¹⁵ And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

¹⁶ "Now therefore, if you acted in good faith and honor when you made Abim'elech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubba'al and his house, and have done to him as his deeds deserved— ¹⁷ for my father fought for you, and risked his life, and rescued you from the hand of Mid'ian; ¹⁸ and you have risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, seventy men on one stone, and have

made Abim'elech, the son of his maid-servant, king over the citizens of Shechem, because he is your kinsman— ¹⁹ if you then have acted in good faith and honor with Jerubba'al and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abim'elech, and let him also rejoice in you; ²⁰ but if not, let fire come out from Abim'elech, and devour the citizens of Shechem, and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the citizens of Shechem, and from Beth-millo, and devour Abim'elech." ²¹ And Jotham ran away and fled, and went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abim'elech his brother.

²² Abim'elech ruled over Israel three years. ²³ And God sent an evil spirit between Abim'elech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abim'elech; ²⁴ that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubba'al might come and their blood be laid upon Abim'elech their brother, who slew them, and upon the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brothers. ²⁵ And the men of Shechem put men in ambush against him on the mountain tops, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abim'elech.

²⁶ And Ga'al the son of Ebed moved into Shechem with his kinsmen; and the men of Shechem put confidence in him. ²⁷ And they went out into the field, and gathered the grapes from their vineyards and trod them, and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and ate and drank and reviled Abim'elech. ²⁸ And Ga'al the son of Ebed said, "Who is Abim'elech, and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him? Did not the son of Jerubba'al and Zebul his officer serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem? Why then should we serve him? ²⁹ Would that this people were under my hand! then I would remove Abim'-

cultic associations with covenant ideology (see Jos.24.25 n.). **6:** *The oak of the pillar*, see Jos. 24.26. **7-21:** Jotham denounces Abimelech. **7:** *Mount Gerizim*, the mountain south of Shechem (see Dt.11.29). **8:** *The olive tree* is the noblest tree, while the bramble (v. 14) is a useless shrub. **22-25:** A quarrel breaks out between Abimelech and the Shechemites. **26-49:** Abimelech crushes

elech, I would say¹ to Abim'elech, 'Increase your army, and come out.' "

30 When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Ga'al the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. ³¹ And he sent messengers to Abim'elech at Aru'mah,^m saying, "Behold, Ga'al the son of Ebed and his kinsmen have come to Shechem, and they are stirring upⁿ the city against you. ³² Now therefore, go by night, you and the men that are with you, and lie in wait in the fields. ³³ Then in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, rise early and rush upon the city; and when he and the men that are with him come out against you, you may do to them as occasion offers."

34 And Abim'elech and all the men that were with him rose up by night, and laid wait against Shechem in four companies. ³⁵ And Ga'al the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city; and Abim'elech and the men that were with him rose from the ambush. ³⁶ And when Ga'al saw the men, he said to Zebul, "Look, men are coming down from the mountain tops!" And Zebul said to him, "You see the shadow of the mountains as if they were men." ³⁷ Ga'al spoke again and said, "Look, men are coming down from the center of the land, and one company is coming from the direction of the Diviners' Oak." ³⁸ Then Zebul said to him, "Where is your mouth now, you who said, 'Who is Abim'elech, that we should serve him?' Are not these the men whom you despised? Go out now and fight with them." ³⁹ And Ga'al went out at the head of the men of Shechem, and fought with Abim'elech. ⁴⁰ And Abim'elech chased him, and he fled before him; and many fell wounded, up to the entrance of the gate. ⁴¹ And Abim'elech dwelt at Aru'mah; and Zebul drove out Ga'al and his kinsmen, so that they could not live on at Shechem.

42 On the following day the men

went out into the fields. And Abim'elech was told. ⁴³ He took his men and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the fields; and he looked and saw the men coming out of the city, and he rose against them and slew them. ⁴⁴ Abim'elech and the company^o that was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city, while the two companies rushed upon all who were in the fields and slew them. ⁴⁵ And Abim'elech fought against the city all that day; he took the city, and killed the people that were in it; and he razed the city and sowed it with salt.

46 When all the people of the Tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of El-be'rith. ⁴⁷ Abim'elech was told that all the people of the Tower of Shechem were gathered together. ⁴⁸ And Abim'elech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the men that were with him; and Abim'elech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bundle of brushwood, and took it up and laid it on his shoulder. And he said to the men that were with him, "What you have seen me do, make haste to do, as I have done." ⁴⁹ So every one of the people cut down his bundle and following Abimelech put it against the stronghold, and they set the stronghold on fire over them, so that all the people of the Tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then Abim'elech went to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. ⁵¹ But there was a strong tower within the city, and all the people of the city fled to it, all the men and women, and shut themselves in; and they went to the roof of the tower. ⁵² And Abim'elech came to the tower, and fought against it, and drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire. ⁵³ And a certain

¹ Gk: Heb and he said

^m Cn See 9.41. Heb Tormah ⁿ Cn: Heb besieging

^o Vg and some Mss of Gk: Heb companies

Gaal's rebellion. 28: Abimelech lived at Arumah (vv. 31,41) and governed Shechem by a deputy, Zebul. 50-57: Abimelech killed at Thebez.

woman threw an upper millstone upon Abim'elech's head, and crushed his skull.⁵⁴ Then he called hastily to the young man his armor-bearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, 'A woman killed him.'"⁵⁵ And his young man thrust him through, and he died.⁵⁶ And when the men of Israel saw that Abim'elech was dead, they departed every man to his home.⁵⁷ Thus God requited the crime of Abim'elech, which he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers; and God also made all the wickedness of the men of Shechem fall back upon their heads, and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubba'al.

10 After Abim'elech there arose to deliver Israel Tola the son of Pu'ah, son of Dodo, a man of Is'sachar; and he lived at Shamir in the hill country of E'phraim.² And he judged Israel twenty-three years. Then he died, and was buried at Shamir.

3 After him arose Ja'ir the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years.⁴ And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty asses; and they had thirty cities, called Hav'voth-ja'ir to this day, which are in the land of Gilead.⁵ And Ja'ir died, and was buried in Kamon.

6 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Ba'als and the Ash'tarothe, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD, and did not serve him.⁷ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel,

and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites,⁸ and they crushed and oppressed the children of Israel that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the people of Israel that were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead.⁹ And the Ammonites crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah and against Benjamin and against the house of E'phraim; so that Israel was sorely distressed.

10 And the people of Israel cried to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against thee, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Ba'als."¹¹ And the LORD said to the people of Israel, "Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines?¹² The Sido'nians also, and the Amal'ekites, and the Ma'onites, oppressed you; and you cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.¹³ Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will deliver you no more.¹⁴ Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress."¹⁵ And the people of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to thee; only deliver us, we pray thee, this day."¹⁶ So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and he became indignant over the misery of Israel.

17 Then the Ammonites were called to arms, and they encamped in Gilead; and the people of Israel came together, and they encamped at Mizpah.¹⁸ And

10.1-5: Two minor judges. The role played by the so-called "minor judges" who are listed here and in 12.8-15 is one of the puzzles of the book, since they were apparently not leaders in war. It has been plausibly suggested that they were the civil heads of the Israelite confederacy, charged with the custody of traditional law, and therefore "judges" in the strict sense of the term. The word would then later have been extended loosely to military heroes of the same period.

10.6-12.7: Jephthah. A Transjordanian hero saves his people from the Ammonites. **10.6-16:** General introduction. **10.17-11.11:** Jephthah, whose disfavor with his own family had forced him to take up a Robin Hood-like existence as head of an outlaw gang, is recalled from exile to lead his people against their Ammonite oppressors. **10.17:** *The Ammonites* were a central Transjordanian people who had Rabbath-Ammon (the modern Amman) as their capital.

the people, the leaders of Gilead, said one to another, "Who is the man that will begin to fight against the Ammonites? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a harlot. Gilead was the father of Jephthah.² And Gilead's wife also bore him sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they thrust Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall not inherit in our father's house; for you are the son of another woman."³ Then Jephthah fled from his brothers, and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless fellows collected round Jephthah, and went raiding with him.

4 After a time the Ammonites made war against Israel.⁵ And when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah from the land of Tob; and they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our leader, that we may fight with the Ammonites."⁷ But Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me, and drive me out of my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?"⁸ And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is why we have turned to you now, that you may go with us and fight with the Ammonites, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."⁹ Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you bring me home again to fight with the Ammonites, and the LORD gives them over to me, I will be your head."¹⁰ And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The LORD will be witness between us; we will surely do as you say."¹¹ So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD at Mizpah.

12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites and

said, "What have you against me, that you have come to me to fight against my land?"¹³ And the king of the Ammonites answered the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel on coming from Egypt took away my land, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan; now therefore restore it peaceably."¹⁴ And Jephthah sent messengers again to the king of the Ammonites¹⁵ and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: Israel did not take away the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites,¹⁶ but when they came up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh."¹⁷ Israel then sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Let us pass, we pray, through your land'; but the king of Edom would not listen. And they sent also to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained at Kadesh.¹⁸ Then they journeyed through the wilderness, and went around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and arrived on the east side of the land of Moab, and camped on the other side of the Arnon; but they did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was the boundary of Moab.¹⁹ Israel then sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, 'Let us pass, we pray, through your land to our country.'²⁰ But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory; so Sihon gathered all his people together, and encamped at Jahaz, and fought with Israel.²¹ And the LORD, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them; so Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country.²² And they took possession of all the territory of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.²³ So then the LORD, the God of Israel, dispos-

Gilead was the northern part of Transjordan. 11.1: There is some confusion here because Gilead is properly the name of a district, not a person. 5: A Hebrew community was governed by a council of the older men, *the elders*. 12-28: Jephthah negotiates in vain with the king of Ammon. 17: Num.20.14-21. 19-23: Num.21.21-32. 24: The argument is that a nation has a right to

essed the Amorites from before his people Israel; and are you to take possession of them? ²⁴ Will you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? And all that the LORD our God has dispossessed before us, we will possess. ²⁵ Now are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever go to war with them? ²⁶ While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aro'er and its villages, and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time? ²⁷ I therefore have not sinned against you, and you do me wrong by making war on me; the LORD, the Judge, decide this day between the people of Israel and the people of Ammon." ²⁸ But the king of the Ammonites did not heed the message of Jephthah which he sent to him.

²⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. ³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If thou wilt give the Ammonites into my hand, ³¹ then whoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the LORD's, and I will offer him up for a burnt offering."

³² So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them; and the LORD gave them into his hand.

³³ And he smote them from Aro'er to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim,

with a very great slaughter. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel.

³⁴ Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah; and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵ And when he saw her, he rent his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me; for I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back my vow." ³⁶ And she said to him, "My father, if you have opened your mouth to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone forth from your mouth, now that the LORD has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites." ³⁷ And she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go and wander^p on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my companions." ³⁸ And he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. ³⁹ And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had made. She had never known a man. And it became a custom in Israel ⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.

12 The men of Ephraim were called to arms, and they crossed to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, "Why

^p Cn: Heb go down

keep that which its god gives to it in war. Curiously, however, Chemosh was the god of the Moabites, not the Ammonites, whose chief god was called Milcom (or Molech; 1 Kg.11.5,7). **25:** *Balak*, see Num. chs. 22-24. **29-33:** Jephthah defeats the Ammonites by means of a vow. **29:** *The Spirit of the LORD*, see 3.10 n.; 6.34. **31:** He takes the extreme step of vowing a human sacrifice (compare 2 Kg.3.27). While human sacrifice was viewed with abhorrence by the Hebrews throughout most of their later history, there is some evidence (as here) that it was practiced in early times, and there were occasional relapses even at a relatively late date (2 Kg. 21.6). **34-40:** Jephthah fulfils his vow by sacrificing his only daughter. **37:** Because a Hebrew woman could suffer no greater disgrace than to die childless, Jephthah's daughter asks time to *bewail her virginity*. **12.1-7:** Jephthah punishes the quarrelsome Ephraimites. **1:** The tribe of Ephraim, located west of the Jordan, exhibited a similar contentious spirit in the Gideon story

did you cross over to fight against the Ammonites, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house over you with fire.”² And Jephthah said to them, “I and my people had a great feud with the Ammonites; and when I called you, you did not deliver me from their hand.”³ And when I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hand, and crossed over against the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into my hand; why then have you come up to me this day, to fight against me?”⁴ Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and fought with E’phraim; and the men of Gilead smote E’phraim, because they said, “You are fugitives of E’phraim, you Gileadites, in the midst of E’phraim and Manas’sch.”⁵ And the Gileadites took the fords of the Jordan against the E’phraimites. And when any of the fugitives of E’phraim said, “Let me go over,” the men of Gilead said to him, “Are you an E’phraimite?” When he said, “No,”⁶ they said to him, “Then say Shibboleth,” and he said, “Sibboleth,” for he could not pronounce it right; then they seized him and slew him at the fords of the Jordan. And there fell at that time forty-two thousand of the E’phraimites.

7 Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in his city in Gilead.⁷

8 After him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.⁸ He had thirty sons:

and thirty daughters he gave in marriage outside his clan, and thirty daughters he brought in from outside for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years.¹⁰ Then Ibzan died, and was buried at Bethlehem.

11 After him Elon the Zeb’ulunite judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years.¹² Then Elon the Zeb’ulunite died, and was buried at Ai’jalon in the land of Zeb’ulun.

13 After him Abdon the son of Hillel the Pira’thonite judged Israel.¹⁴ He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy asses; and he judged Israel eight years.¹⁵ Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pira’thonite died, and was buried at Pira’thon in the land of E’phraim, in the hill country of the Amal’ekites.

13 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Mano’ah; and his wife was barren and had no children.

³ And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have no children; but you shall conceive and bear a son.

⁴ Therefore beware, and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean,⁵ for lo, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon

q Gk: Heb in the cities of Gilead

(8.1). **3:** Jephthah, unlike Gideon (8.2–3), decided to fight fire with fire instead of gentle words. **4:** The meaning of the second part of this verse is not clear. **5:** The Ephraimites tried to slip back to their own country west of the Jordan by *the fords*. **6:** The Ephraimites spoke a slightly different dialect of Hebrew and could easily be recognized by their inability to pronounce the “sh” sound in “shibboleth,” meaning “ear [head] of grain.”

12.8–15: Three more minor judges. See 10.1–5 n.

13.1–16.31: Samson. Although a legendary hero of the tribe of Dan and frequently engaged in fighting with the Philistines, Samson does not really fit the pattern of the judges since his conflicts are almost entirely personal rather than tribal or national. **13.1–25:** Samson’s birth. **1:** *The Philistines* were a non-Semitic people, possibly from Crete, who settled on the coastal plain of Palestine about the same time the Hebrews were entering the land from the east. **2:** *The Danites* were at this period situated in the southwest, near the Philistine plain; later, because of the pressure from the aggressive and expanding Philistine nation, they were forced to move to the north (ch. 18). The Samson stories have considerable historical value in that they illustrate the conditions of life in this uncomfortable situation and the kind of pressures which eventually made the migration necessary. *Barren*, see 11.37 n. **3:** *The angel of the LORD*, see

his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”⁶ Then the woman came and told her husband, “A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; I did not ask him whence he was, and he did not tell me his name;⁷ but he said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son; so then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death.’”

8 Then Mano’ah entreated the LORD, and said, “O, LORD, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again to us, and teach us what we are to do with the boy that will be born.”⁹ And God listened to the voice of Mano’ah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field; but Mano’ah her husband was not with her.¹⁰ And the woman ran in haste and told her husband, “Behold, the man who came to me the other day has appeared to me.”

¹¹ And Mano’ah arose and went after his wife, and came to the man and said to him, “Are you the man who spoke to this woman?” And he said, “I am.”¹² And Mano’ah said, “Now when your words come true, what is to be the boy’s manner of life, and what is he to do?”¹³ And the angel of the LORD said to Mano’ah, “Of all that I said to the woman let her beware.¹⁴ She may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe.”

15 Mano’ah said to the angel of the LORD, “Pray, let us detain you, and pre-

pare a kid for you.”¹⁶ And the angel of the LORD said to Mano’ah, “If you detain me, I will not eat of your food; but if you make ready a burnt offering, then offer it to the LORD.” (For Mano’ah did not know that he was the angel of the LORD.)¹⁷ And Mano’ah said to the angel of the LORD, “What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honor you?”¹⁸ And the angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?”¹⁹ So Mano’ah took the kid with the cereal offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD, to him who works wonders.²⁰ And when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar while Mano’ah and his wife looked on; and they fell on their faces to the ground.

21 The angel of the LORD appeared no more to Mano’ah and to his wife. Then Mano’ah knew that he was the angel of the LORD.²² And Mano’ah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, for we have seen God.”²³ But his wife said to him, “If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a cereal offering at our hands, or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these.”²⁴ And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the boy grew, and the LORD blessed him.²⁵ And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Ma’haneddan, between Zorah and Esh’ta-ol.

14 Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.² Then he came up, and told his father and

^r Gk Vg: Heb and working

^s Heb wonders, while Manoah and his wife looked on

2.1 n. 5: A Nazirite was one consecrated to God by the taking of these special vows; in early Israel the vows were for life, in later times (as in the law of Num.6.1–21) only temporary. It is only in this chapter and in 16.17 that Samson is designated a Nazirite. 14: Even the eating of grapes was forbidden, since they were the chief symbol of the culture and religion of the Canaanites (Num.6.4–5). 17: The knowledge of a god’s name was necessary in order that he might be reached again when desired (compare Gen.32.29). 18: Wonderful, incommunicable. 25: The Spirit of the LORD, see 3.10 n. (and 14.6,19).

14.1–20: Samson’s brief marriage to a Philistine woman. 3: Uncircumcised, the Philistines,

mother, "I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah; now get her for me as my wife."³ But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your kinsmen, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me; for she pleases me well."

4 His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD; for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5 Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and he came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion roared against him;⁶ and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion asunder as one tears a kid; and he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.⁸ And after a while he returned to take her; and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey.⁹ He scraped it out into his hands, and went on, eating as he went; and he came to his father and mother, and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion.

10 And his father went down to the woman, and Samson made a feast there; for so the young men used to do.¹¹ And when the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him.¹² And Samson said to them, "Let me now put a riddle to you; if you

can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments;¹³ but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments." And they said to him, "Put your riddle, that we may hear it."¹⁴ And he said to them,

"Out of the eater came something to eat.

Out of the strong came something sweet."

And they could not in three days tell what the riddle was.

15 On the fourth^t day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?"¹⁶ And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, "You only hate me, you do not love me; you have put a riddle to my countrymen, and you have not told me what it is." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?"¹⁷ She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted; and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her countrymen.¹⁸ And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

"What is sweeter than honey?

What is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my

heifer,

you would not have found out my riddle."

¹⁹ And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he went down

^t Gk Syr: Heb *seventh*

unlike the Hebrews and most of their neighbors, did not practice circumcision. 4: *Had dominion over Israel*, the Philistine wars were a major preoccupation in the following period of Israelite history; at the beginning the Philistines had the advantage because of their higher level of material culture (1 Sam.13.19). 6: Crude and primitive as this passage is, it is of great importance as showing that the experience underlying the Biblical conception of *the Spirit of the LORD* (see 3.10 n.) is that of a tremendous accession of power beyond the normal capabilities of man. In later times the idea became that of moral and spiritual rather than merely physical power (Ps.51.11; Ezek.36.26-27; 1 Cor.2.4). 10: It was evidently customary in the days of the judges for the bridegroom to provide the marriage feast. 14: *They could not . . . tell what the*

to Ashkelon and killed thirty men of the town, and took their spoil and gave the festal garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house.²⁰ And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

15 After a while, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife with a kid; and he said, "I will go in to my wife in the chamber." But her father would not allow him to go in.² And her father said, "I really thought that you utterly hated her; so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Pray take her instead."³ And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines, when I do them mischief."⁴ So Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches; and he turned them tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails.⁵ And when he had set fire to the torches, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the olive orchards.⁶ Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." And the Philistines came up, and burned her and her father with fire.⁷ And Samson said to them, "If this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged upon you, and after that I will quit."⁸ And he smote them hip and thigh with great slaughter; and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

9 Then the Philistines came up and

encamped in Judah, and made a raid on Lehi.¹⁰ And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" They said, "We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us."¹¹ Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so have I done to them."¹² And they said to him, "We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not fall upon me yourselves."¹³ They said to him, "No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands; we will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes, and brought him up from the rock.

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the ropes which were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands.¹⁵ And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and put out his hand and seized it, and with it he slew a thousand men.¹⁶ And Samson said,

"With the jawbone of an ass,
heaps upon heaps,
with the jawbone of an ass
have I slain a thousand men."

17 When he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand; and that place was called Ramath-lehi.^u

u That is The hill of the jawbone

riddle was, because it was insoluble without the key! **19:** *Ashkelon* was one of the five principal Philistine cities, the Philistines being not a unified state, but a confederation of five cities. The other members were Ekron, Ashdod, Gaza, and Gath.

15.1-8: Samson's revenge for the loss of his wife. **1:** The marriage which Samson believed himself to have contracted was of an ancient type in which the husband came only from time to time to visit his wife, who continued to live with her parents. A *kid* was perhaps the usual gift for sexual intimacy (Gen.38.17). **8:** *Hip and thigh* is a proverbial expression of which the original significance has been lost.

15.9-20: Samson's further vengeance. When the Philistines attempt to capture him, Samson kills a thousand of them with an improvised weapon. **9:** *Lehi* in Hebrew means jawbone (vv. 15-16). **16:** Like the riddle in v. 14 this couplet involves a pun, the Hebrew words for *ass* and

18 And he was very thirsty, and he called on the LORD and said, "Thou hast granted this great deliverance by the hand of thy servant; and shall I now die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" ¹⁹ And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and there came water from it; and when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore the name of it was called En-hakkor'e;^v it is at Lehi to this day. ²⁰ And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

16 Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a harlot, and he went in to her. ² The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here," and they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him." ³ But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is before Hebron.

⁴ After this he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵ And the lords of the Philistines came to her and said to her, "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to subdue him; and we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver." ⁶ And Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me wherein your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you." ⁷ And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings which

have not been dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." ⁸ Then the lords of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. ⁹ Now she had men lying in wait in an inner chamber. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the bowstrings, as a string of tow snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

¹⁰ And Delilah said to Samson, "Behold, you have mocked me, and told me lies; please tell me how you might be bound." ¹¹ And he said to her, "If they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." ¹² So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And the men lying in wait were in an inner chamber. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

¹³ And Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me, and told me lies; tell me how you might be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and make it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." ¹⁴ So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled away the pin, the loom, and the web.

¹⁵ And she said to him, "How can

^v That is *The spring of him who called*

^w Compare Gk: Heb lacks *and make it tight . . . into the web*

heap(s) being identical. **18-19:** A story explaining the place name En-hakkore, literally "the spring of him who called."

16.1-3: Samson eludes the Philistines at Gaza. **1:** *Gaza* was another city of the Philistine pentapolis or five-city confederation (1.18 n.; 14.19). Samson's relations with the *harlot* are typical of his character and the morals of his day. **3:** *Hebron*, nearly forty miles east of *Gaza*.

16.4-22: Delilah's betrayal of Samson. His third adventure with a Philistine woman brings Samson to a tragic end. **4:** *The valley of Sorek* led into the north end of the Philistine plain. **13:** *The web and the pin* were parts of a loom.

you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me wherein your great strength lies." ¹⁶ And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. ¹⁷ And he told her all his mind, and said to her, "A razor has never come upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I be shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

¹⁸ When Deli'lah saw that he had told her all his mind, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up this once, for he has told me all his mind." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands. ¹⁹ She made him sleep upon her knees; and she called a man, and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. ²⁰ And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free." And he did not know that the LORD had left him. ²¹ And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with bronze fetters; and he ground at the mill in the prison. ²² But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

²³ Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand." ²⁴ And when the people saw him, they praised

their god; for they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has slain many of us." ²⁵ And when their hearts were merry, they said, "Call Samson, that he may make sport for us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he made sport before them. They made him stand between the pillars; ²⁶ and Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them." ²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women, who looked on while Samson made sport.

²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged upon the Philistines for one of my two eyes." ²⁹ And Samson grasped the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and he leaned his weight upon them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. ³⁰ And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then he bowed with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were in it. So the dead whom he slew at his death were more than those whom he had slain during his life. ³¹ Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Esh'ta-ol in the tomb of Mano'ah his father. He had judged Israel twenty years.

|| ⁷ There was a man of the hill country of E'phraim, whose name was Micah. ² And he said to his

17: The story that Samson was a *Nazirite* (ch. 13) seems to be a late attempt to make Samson respectable; none of his exploits show him as a religious enthusiast. The motif of the unshorn hair is probably derived from mythology rather than high religion. The name Samson is connected with the Hebrew word for "sun"; some scholars believe the stories originally go back to pre-Hebrew sources in which the hair represented the sun's rays, i.e. its strength.

16.23-31: Samson's final act of vengeance. 23: Dagon was an ancient Semitic deity whose cult had been adopted by the Philistines after their settlement in the land (see 1 Sam.5.2 n.).

28: The expression for one of my two eyes shows that to the end Samson's motives were personal rather than religious or national.

mother, "The eleven hundred pieces of silver which were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it." And his mother said, "Blessed be my son by the LORD."³ And he restored the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother; and his mother said, "I consecrate the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image; now therefore I will restore it to you."⁴ So when he restored the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave it to the silversmith, who made it into a graven image and a molten image; and it was in the house of Micah.⁵ And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and teraphim, and installed one of his sons, who became his priest.⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

⁷ Now there was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite; and he sojournd there.⁸ And the man departed from the town of Bethlehem in Judah, to live where he could find a place; and as he journeyed, he came to the hill country of E'phraim to the house of Micah.⁹ And Micah said to him, "From where do you come?" And he said to him, "I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find a place."¹⁰ And Micah said to him, "Stay with

me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, and a suit of apparel, and your living."^w ¹¹ And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man became to him like one of his sons.¹² And Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.¹³ Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest."

18 In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in; for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.² So the Danites sent five able men from the whole number of their tribe, from Zorah and from Esh'ta-ol, to spy out the land and to explore it; and they said to them, "Go and explore the land." And they came to the hill country of E'phraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.³ When they were by the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; and they turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is your business here?"⁴ And he said to them, "Thus and thus has Micah dealt with me: he has hired me, and I have become his priest."⁵ And they said to him, "Inquire of God, we pray thee, that we may know whether the journey on which we are setting out

^w Heb living, and the Levite went

17.1-6: The shrine of Micah. The two tales which occupy chs. 17-21 are not concerned with "judges" although they relate to the same period. This one (chs. 17-18) begins with the story of a certain Micah whose mother expiated his theft of a large sum of silver from her by erecting a family shrine containing silver images. The fully matured religion of Israel forbade the use of graven and molten images (Ex.20.4,23; 34.17), but there were evidently circles in early times, such as those in this story, where such laws were unknown. **5: An ephod and teraphim** were cult objects (8.27; 2 Kg.23.24) perhaps used for divination (Ezek.21.21). **6:** This verse, like 21.25, expresses the feeling of a later editor that such things were possible only because of the near anarchy of the times.

17.7-13: Micah obtains a Levite for his family chaplain. The story shows that the Levites at this time enjoyed a certain prestige even though others could act as priests when necessary. **7: Bethlehem,** a city in Judah five miles south of Jerusalem, and later the birthplace of David.

18.1-31: The migration of the tribe of Dan. In the early days of the judges Dan was located in the southwest (Jos.19.40-46; Jg.1.34; 13.2), but the pressure of the Philistines forced them to move to the far north. **1-10:** Spies locate a favorable place to settle. **5: To inquire of God** is to

will succeed.”⁶ And the priest said to them, “Go in peace. The journey on which you go is under the eye of the LORD.”

7 Then the five men departed, and came to La’ish, and saw the people who were there, how they dwelt in security, after the manner of the Sido’nians, quiet and unsuspecting, lacking^x nothing that is in the earth, and possessing wealth, and how they were far from the Sido’nians and had no dealings with any one.⁸ And when they came to their brethren at Zorah and Esh’ta-ol, their brethren said to them, “What do you report?”⁹ They said, “Arise, and let us go up against them; for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very fertile. And will you do nothing? Do not be slow to go, and enter in and possess the land.”¹⁰ When you go, you will come to an unsuspecting people. The land is broad; yea, God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is in the earth.”

11 And six hundred men of the tribe of Dan, armed with weapons of war, set forth from Zorah and Esh’ta-ol,¹² and went up and encamped at Kir’iath-je’arim in Judah. On this account that place is called Ma’haneh-dan^y to this day; behold, it is west of Kir’iath-je’arim.¹³ And they passed on from there to the hill country of E’phraim, and came to the house of Micah.

14 Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of La’ish said to their brethren, “Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod, teraphim, a graven image, and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you will do.”¹⁵ And they turned aside thither, and came to the house of the young Levite, at the home of Micah, and asked him of his welfare.¹⁶ Now

the six hundred men of the Danites, armed with their weapons of war, stood by the entrance of the gate;¹⁷ and the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up, and entered and took the graven image, the ephod, the teraphim, and the molten image, while the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of war.¹⁸ And when these went into Micah’s house and took the graven image, the ephod, the teraphim, and the molten image, the priest said to them, “What are you doing?”¹⁹ And they said to him, “Keep quiet, put your hand upon your mouth, and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and family in Israel?”²⁰ And the priest’s heart was glad; he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

21 So they turned and departed, putting the little ones and the cattle and the goods in front of them.²² When they were a good way from the home of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah’s house were called out, and they overtook the Danites.²³ And they shouted to the Danites, who turned round and said to Micah, “What ails you that you come with such a company?”²⁴ And he said, “You take my gods which I made, and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then do you ask me, ‘What ails you?’”²⁵ And the Danites said to him, “Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and you lose your life with the lives of your household.”²⁶ Then the Danites went their way; and when Micah saw that they were

^x Cn Compare 18.10. The Hebrew text is uncertain

^y That is *Camp of Dan*

consult the sacred oracle, probably by the casting of lots. The original function of the priesthood seems to have been the determination of God’s will through consulting an oracle. Later this function in a somewhat different form was adopted by the prophets, and the priests took over the responsibility for offering sacrifices and exercising other functions in the cult. 7: *Laish*, near the sources of the Jordan, was allied with the Phoenicians (*the Sidonians*), who were, however, very far away. 11-26: Dan emigrates and, on the way, steals Micah’s priest

too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home.

27 And taking what Micah had made, and the priest who belonged to him, the Danites came to La'ish, to a people quiet and unsuspecting, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and burned the city with fire.

28 And there was no deliverer because it was far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with any one. It was in the valley which belongs to Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city, and dwelt in it. 29 And they named the city Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was La'ish at the first. 30 And the Danites set up the graven image for themselves; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses,^z and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 So they set up Micah's graven image which he made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh.

19 In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of E'phraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. 2 And his concubine became angry with^a him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there some four months. 3 Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her and bring her back. He had with him his servant and a couple of asses. And he came^b to her father's house; and when the girl's father saw him, he came with joy to meet him. 4 And his father-in-law, the girl's father, made him stay, and he remained with him three days; so they ate and drank, and lodged there.

5 And on the fourth day they arose

early in the morning, and he prepared to go; but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Strengthen your heart with a morsel of bread, and after that you may go." 6 So the two men sat and ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, "Be pleased to spend the night, and let your heart be merry." 7 And when the man rose up to go, his father-in-law urged him, till he lodged there again. 8 And on the fifth day he arose early in the morning to depart; and the girl's father said, "Strengthen your heart, and tarry until the day declines." So they ate, both of them. 9 And when the man and his concubine and his servant rose up to depart, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, "Behold, now the day has waned toward evening; pray tarry all night. Behold, the day draws to its close; lodge here and let your heart be merry; and tomorrow you shall arise early in the morning for your journey, and go home."

10 But the man would not spend the night; he rose up and departed, and arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). He had with him a couple of saddled asses, and his concubine was with him. 11 When they were near Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant said to his master, "Come now, let us turn aside to this city of the Jeb'usites, and spend the night in it." 12 And his master said to him, "We will not turn aside into the city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel; but we will pass on to Gib'e-ah." 13 And he said to his servant, "Come and let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night at Gib'e-ah or at Ramah." 14 So they passed on and went their way; and the

^z Another reading is *Manasseh*

^a Gk Old Latin: Heb *played the harlot against*

^b Gk: Heb *she brought him*

and images. 27-31: Dan captures Laish and settles there. 30: The shrine of Dan was one of the two great shrines of the later northern kingdom (1 Kg.12.29).

19.1-30: The appalling crime of the Benjaminites. 1-9: An Ephraimite Levite goes to Bethlehem to bring back his concubine. *Ephraim* is at the center of the country; *Bethlehem* a little south of Jerusalem. 10-21: On the return journey they are hospitably received by an aged fellow-countryman living in Gibeah. 12: Jerusalem was still occupied by foreigners, the Canaanite clan called the Jebusites (2 Sam.5.6). *Gibeah*, a short distance north of Jerusalem, was later

sun went down on them near Gib'e-ah, which belongs to Benjamin,¹⁵ and they turned aside there, to go in and spend the night at Gib'e-ah. And he went in and sat down in the open square of the city; for no man took them into his house to spend the night.

16 And behold, an old man was coming from his work in the field at evening; the man was from the hill country of E'phraim, and he was sojourning in Gib'e-ah; the men of the place were Benjaminites.¹⁷ And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the wayfarer in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going? and whence do you come?"

¹⁸ And he said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote parts of the hill country of E'phraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; and I am going to my home;^c and nobody takes me into his house."¹⁹ We have straw and provender for our asses, with bread and wine for me and your maidservant and the young man with your servants; there is no lack of anything."²⁰ And the old man said, "Peace be to you; I will care for all your wants; only, do not spend the night in the square."

²¹ So he brought him into his house, and gave the asses provender; and they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

22 As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, base fellows, beset the house round about, beating on the door; and they said to the old man, the master of the house, "Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him."²³ And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren, do not act so wickedly; seeing that this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing."²⁴ Behold, here are my

virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do with them what seems good to you; but against this man do not do so vile a thing."²⁵ But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them; and they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go.²⁶ And as morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light.

27 And her master rose up in the morning, and when he opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, behold, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold.²⁸ He said to her, "Get up, let us be going." But there was no answer. Then he put her upon the ass; and the man rose up and went away to his home.²⁹ And when he entered his house, he took a knife, and laying hold of his concubine he divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.³⁰ And all who saw it said, "Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day; consider it, take counsel, and speak."

20 Then all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled as one man to the LORD at Mizpah.² And the chiefs of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand men on foot that drew the sword.³ (Now the Benjaminites heard that the people of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) And the people of Israel said, "Tell us,

^c Gk Compare 19.29. Heb to the house of the LORD

the home of Saul (1 Sam.10.26). **22-26:** The Benjaminites ravish the concubine until she dies. Such behavior was supposed to be typical of the Canaanites (Gen.19.4-9), but abhorrent to the Hebrews. **27-30:** The Levite summons the other tribes to avenge the crime. **29:** In 1 Sam. 11.7 Saul calls up the tribes of Israel in strikingly similar fashion.

20.1-48: The punishment of Benjamin. 1-11: The tribes assemble to take counsel. **1:** Mizpah,

how was this wickedness brought to pass?" ⁴ And the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "I came to Gib'e-ah that belongs to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night. ⁵ And the men of Gib'e-ah rose against me, and beset the house round about me by night; they meant to kill me, and they ravished my concubine, and she is dead. ⁶ And I took my concubine and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel; for they have committed abomination and wantonness in Israel. ⁷ Behold, you people of Israel, all of you, give your advice and counsel here."

⁸ And all the people arose as one man, saying, "We will not any of us go to his tent, and none of us will return to his house. ⁹ But now this is what we will do to Gib'e-ah: we will go up against it by lot, ¹⁰ and we will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred of a thousand, and a thousand of ten thousand, to bring provisions for the people, that when they come they may requite Gib'e-ah of Benjamin, for all the wanton crime which they have committed in Israel." ¹¹ So all the men of Israel gathered against the city, united as one man.

¹² And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What wickedness is this that has taken place among you? ¹³ Now therefore give up the men, the base fellows in Gib'e-ah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel." But the Benjaminites would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the people of Israel. ¹⁴ And the Benjaminites came together out of the cities to Gib'e-ah, to go out to battle against the people of Israel. ¹⁵ And the Ben-

jaminites mustered out of their cities on that day twenty-six thousand men that drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gib'e-ah, who mustered seven hundred picked men. ¹⁶ Among all these were seven hundred picked men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair, and not miss. ¹⁷ And the men of Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand men that drew sword; all these were men of war.

¹⁸ The people of Israel arose and went up to Bethel, and inquired of God, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the Benjaminites?" And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up first."

¹⁹ Then the people of Israel rose in the morning, and encamped against Gib'e-ah. ²⁰ And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel drew up the battle line against them at Gib'e-ah. ²¹ The Benjaminites came out of Gib'e-ah, and felled to the ground on that day twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites. ²² But the people, the men of Israel, took courage, and again formed the battle line in the same place where they had formed it on the first day. ²³ And the people of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until the evening; and they inquired of the LORD, "Shall we again draw near to battle against our brethren the Benjaminites?" And the LORD said, "Go up against them."

²⁴ So the people of Israel came near against the Benjaminites the second day. ²⁵ And Benjamin went against them out of Gib'e-ah the second day, and felled to the ground eighteen thousand men of the people of Israel; all these were men who drew the sword. ²⁶ Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel and wept; they sat there before

a city on the northern boundary of Benjamin. **12-36:** After two initial defeats, the tribes defeat the Benjaminites by a ruse. **17:** Such numbers as *four hundred thousand* in this chapter are vastly exaggerated. **18:** *Bethel*, an important sacred place in the stories of the patriarchs (Gen. 12.8; 28.11-19) and later one of the two principal sanctuaries of the northern kingdom (1 Kg. 12.29), was just a few miles northeast of Mizpah (v. 1). On the phrase *inquired of God*, see 18.5. **23:** *Wept before the LORD*, Dt.1.45; 2 Kg.22.19; Jl.2.15-17.

the LORD, and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. ²⁷ And the people of Israel inquired of the LORD (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, ²⁸ and Phin'eas the son of Elea'zar, son of Aaron, ministered before it in those days), saying, "Shall we yet again go out to battle against our brethren the Benjaminites, or shall we cease?" And the LORD said, "Go up; for tomorrow I will give them into your hand."

²⁹ So Israel set men in ambush round about Gib'e-ah. ³⁰ And the people of Israel went up against the Benjaminites on the third day, and set themselves in array against Gib'e-ah, as at other times. ³¹ And the Benjaminites went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and as at other times they began to smite and kill some of the people, in the highways, one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gib'e-ah, and in the open country, about thirty men of Israel. ³² And the Benjaminites said, "They are routed before us, as at the first." But the men of Israel said, "Let us flee, and draw them away from the city to the highways." ³³ And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and set themselves in array at Ba'al-ta'mar; and the men of Israel who were in ambush rushed out of their place west^d of Geba. ³⁴ And there came against Gib'e-ah ten thousand picked men out of all Israel, and the battle was hard; but the Benjaminites did not know that disaster was close upon them. ³⁵ And the LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel; and the men of Israel destroyed twenty-five thousand one hundred men of Benjamin that day; all these were men who drew the sword. ³⁶ So the Benjaminites saw that they were defeated.

The men of Israel gave ground to Benjamin, because they trusted to the men in ambush whom they had set

against Gib'e-ah. ³⁷ And the men in ambush made haste and rushed upon Gib'e-ah; the men in ambush moved out and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. ³⁸ Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that when they made a great cloud of smoke rise up out of the city ³⁹ the men of Israel should turn in battle. Now Benjamin had begun to smite and kill about thirty men of Israel; they said, "Surely they are smitten down before us, as in the first battle." ⁴⁰ But when the signal began to rise out of the city in a column of smoke, the Benjaminites looked behind them; and behold, the whole of the city went up in smoke to heaven. ⁴¹ Then the men of Israel turned, and the men of Benjamin were dismayed, for they saw that disaster was close upon them. ⁴² Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and those who came out of the cities destroyed them in the midst of them. ⁴³ Cutting down^e the Benjaminites, they pursued them and trod them down from Nohah^f as far as opposite Gib'e-ah on the east. ⁴⁴ Eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell, all of them men of valor. ⁴⁵ And they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon; five thousand men of them were cut down in the highways, and they were pursued hard to Gidom, and two thousand men of them were slain. ⁴⁶ So all who fell that day of Benjamin were twenty-five thousand men that drew the sword, all of them men of valor. ⁴⁷ But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and abode at the rock of Rimmon four months. ⁴⁸ And the men of Israel turned back against the Benjaminites, and smote them with the edge of the sword, men

^d Gk Vg: Heb in the plain

^e Gk: Heb surrounding

^f Gk: Heb (at their) resting place

36-48: A further account of the ambush and subsequent victory. This section seems to contain a different version of the Israelites' stratagem.

and beasts and all that they found. And all the towns which they found they set on fire.

21 Now the men of Israel had sworn at Mizpah, "No one of us shall give his daughter in marriage to Benjamin." ² And the people came to Bethel, and sat there till evening before God, and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. ³ And they said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel?" ⁴ And on the morrow the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. ⁵ And the people of Israel said, "Which of all the tribes of Israel did not come up in the assembly to the LORD?" For they had taken a great oath concerning him who did not come up to the LORD to Mizpah, saying, "He shall be put to death." ⁶ And the people of Israel had compassion for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel this day. ⁷ What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them any of our daughters for wives?"

⁸ And they said, "What one is there of the tribes of Israel that did not come up to the LORD to Mizpah?" And behold, no one had come to the camp from Ja'bish-gil'ead, to the assembly. ⁹ For when the people were mustered, behold, not one of the inhabitants of Ja'bish-gil'ead was there. ¹⁰ So the congregation sent thither twelve thousand of their bravest men, and commanded them, "Go and smite the inhabitants of Ja'bish-gil'ead with the edge of the sword; also the women and the little ones. ¹¹ This is what you shall do; every male and every woman that has lain with a male you shall utterly

destroy." ¹² And they found among the inhabitants of Ja'bish-gil'ead four hundred young virgins who had not known man by lying with him; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

¹³ Then the whole congregation sent word to the Benjaminites who were at the rock of Rimmon, and proclaimed peace to them. ¹⁴ And Benjamin returned at that time; and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Ja'bish-gil'ead; but they did not suffice for them. ¹⁵ And the people had compassion on Benjamin because the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.

¹⁶ Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?"

¹⁷ And they said, "There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe be not blotted out from Israel. ¹⁸ Yet we cannot give them wives of our daughters." For the people of Israel had sworn, "Cursed be he who gives a wife to Benjamin." ¹⁹ So they said, "Behold, there is the yearly feast of the LORD at Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebo'nah."

²⁰ And they commanded the Benjaminites, saying, "Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, ²¹ and watch; if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and seize each man his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. ²² And when their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will say to them, 'Grant them graciously to us; because we did not take for each man of them

21.1-25: Two devices to secure wives for the Benjaminites. With swift change of heart, the tribes realize that Benjamin is on the verge of extinction and take measures to find wives for the remaining men. **1-15:** They exterminate most of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, east of the Jordan, for disloyalty to the common enterprise, but save four hundred girls as wives for the Benjaminites. **16-25:** The remaining Benjaminite men are granted permission to snatch wives for themselves from the dancers in the annual vintage festival at Shiloh. For the Shiloh festival, see 1 Sam.1.3,21.

his wife in battle, neither did you give them to them, else you would now be guilty.' " ²³ And the Benjaminites did so, and took their wives, according to their number, from the dancers whom they carried off; then they went and returned to their inheritance, and rebuilt the towns, and dwelt in them.

²⁴ And the people of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family, and they went out from there every man to his inheritance.

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

The quiet, idyllic mood of the book of Ruth and the charm of its gentle heroine have given it a special appeal to many generations of readers. Although the story is ostensibly set in the days of the Judges, it has nothing in common with the sanguinary tales of international and inter-tribal warfare narrated in the preceding book. Since the woman Ruth is a Moabitess, not an Israelite, the effect of the book, if not its purpose, is to create a sympathetic feeling toward foreigners who put themselves under the protection of Israel's God. For this reason many have supposed it to be a post-exilic composition, based on an older tale, intended to counteract the harsh decrees of Ezra and Nehemiah which required Hebrew men to divorce their foreign wives and marry only within the covenant community (Ezra 10.1-5; Neh.13.23-27).

Israel after the Exile developed tendencies in two quite opposite directions: on the one hand a major tendency to draw within herself and emphasize the exclusiveness of her election as God's chosen people, and on the other hand a broad and liberal one which sought to make of her "a blessing in the midst of the earth" (Is.19.24), "a light to the nations" (Is.49.6). Among the noblest monuments of this latter tendency are the books of Jonah and Ruth. The opening verses of our story tell of Ruth's marriage to a Hebrew man and how, on his death, she chose to return to Judah with her mother-in-law to share the fortunes of her husband's people rather than remain in the relative security of her native land (ch. 1). There her loyalty and kindness won her the love of Boaz (2.1-4.12), and through her marriage to him she became the great-grandmother of David the king (4.13-22).

IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES ruled there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.² The name of the man was Elim'elech and the name of his wife Na'omi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chil'ion; they were Eph'rathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.³ But Elim'elech, the husband of Na'omi, died, and she was left with her two sons.⁴ These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years;⁵ and both Mahlon and Chil'ion died, so that the woman was bereft of her two sons and her husband.

6 Then she started with her daugh-

ters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food.⁷ So she set out from the place where she was, with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.⁸ But Na'omi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me."⁹ The LORD grant that you may find a home, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.¹⁰ And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."¹¹ But Na'omi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my

1.1-22: Ruth's courageous decision. **1-5:** Naomi, a Hebrew woman who, with her family, had settled in Moab, loses through death both her husband and her two sons. One of the sons was the husband of Ruth, the other the husband of Orpah, both Moabite women. **1:** *Bethlehem*, the later birthplace of David (and Jesus). *Moab*, the country directly east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites were often regarded as particular enemies of the Israelites (Dt.23.3). **6-18:** Ruth deliberately chooses to go to Judah and become a member of her mother-in-law's people. **19-22:** They arrive in Bethlehem.

womb that they may become your husbands? ¹² Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³ would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.” ¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” ¹⁶ But Ruth said, “Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; ¹⁷ where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if even death parts me from you.” ¹⁸ And when Na’omi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹ So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, “Is this Na’omi?” ²⁰ She said to them, “Do not call me Na’omi,^a call me Mara,^b for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹ I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Na’omi, when the LORD has afflicted^c me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”

²² So Na’omi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

2 Now Na’omi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Bo’az. ² And Ruth the Moabite said to Na’omi, “Let me go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” ³ So she set forth and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Bo’az, who was of the family of Elimelech. ⁴ And behold, Bo’az came from Bethlehem; and he said to the reapers, “The LORD be with you!” And they answered, “The LORD bless you.” ⁵ Then Bo’az said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose maiden is this?” ⁶ And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, “It is the Moabite maiden, who came back with Na’omi from the country of Moab. ⁷ She said, ‘Pray, let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.’ So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, without resting even for a moment.”^d

⁸ Then Bo’az said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my maidens. ⁹ Let your eyes be upon the field which they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to molest you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.” ¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?” ¹¹ But Bo’az answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law

^a That is *Pleasant* ^b That is *Bitter*

^c Gk Syr Vg: Heb *testified against*

^d Compare Gk Vg: the meaning of the Hebrew text is uncertain

2.1-23: Ruth in the field of Boaz. 1-3: While gleaning, Ruth happens to come to the part owned by Boaz. 2: Hebrew law allowed the poor to *glean* the fields, i.e. to pick up what was left after the reapers had passed (Lev.19.9-10). 4-23: She attracts the kindly attention of Boaz. 15-16: He authorizes a little generous cheating on her behalf.

since the death of your husband has been fully told me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. ¹² The LORD recompense you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" ¹³ Then she said, "You are most gracious to me, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not one of your maidservants."

¹⁴ And at mealtime Bo'az said to her, "Come here, and eat some bread, and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her parched grain; and she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. ¹⁵ When she rose to glean, Bo'az instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. ¹⁶ And also pull out some from the bundles for her, and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening; then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸ And she took it up and went into the city; she showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned, and she also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. ¹⁹ And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Bo'az." ²⁰ And Na'omi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Na'omi also said to her, "The man is a relative of ours, one of

our nearest kin." ²¹ And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my servants, till they have finished all my harvest.'" ²² And Na'omi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is well, my daughter, that you go out with his maidens, lest in another field you be molested." ²³ So she kept close to the maidens of Bo'az, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests; and she lived with her mother-in-law.

3 Then Na'omi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek a home for you, that it may be well with you? ² Now is not Bo'az our kinsman, with whose maidens you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³ Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." ⁵ And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had told her. ⁷ And when Bo'az had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸ At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! ⁹ He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant; spread your skirt over your maidservant, for you are next of kin." ¹⁰ And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter; you have made this last kindness greater than the first, in that you have not gone after young

3.1-4.12: Ruth becomes engaged to Boaz. 3.1-5: Naomi instructs her how to show her love for Boaz. **6-18:** She carries out Naomi's instructions and wins the assent of Boaz. **9:** *Spread your skirt over your maidservant* means to take her for wife. The *next of kin* had the right and obligation to protect the property and honor of his kinsman and to maintain his family line

men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear, I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of worth. ¹² And now it is true that I am a near kinsman, yet there is a kinsman nearer than I. ¹³ Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will do the part of the next of kin for you, well; let him do it; but if he is not willing to do the part of the next of kin for you, then, as the LORD lives, I will do the part of the next of kin for you. Lie down until the morning."

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵ And he said, "Bring the mantle you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and laid it upon her; then she went into the city. ¹⁶ And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, ¹⁷ saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" ¹⁸ She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today."

4 And Bo'az went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the next of kin, of whom Bo'az had spoken, came by. So Bo'az said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here"; and he turned aside and sat down. ² And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here"; so they sat down.

³ Then he said to the next of kin, "Na'omi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land which belonged to our kinsman Elim'elech. ⁴ So I thought I would tell you of it, and say, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And he said, "I will redeem it." ⁵ Then Bo'az said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Na'omi, you are also buying Ruth^e the Moabitess, the widow of the dead, in order to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance." ⁶ Then the next of kin said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. ⁸ So when the next of kin said to Bo'az, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal. ⁹ Then Bo'az said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Na'omi all that belonged to Elim'elech and all that belonged to Chil'ion and to Mahlon. ¹⁰ Also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate

^e Old Latin Vg: Heb of Naomi and from Ruth

(Lev.25.25; Dt.25.5-6; see also Jos.20.3 n.). **12:** The nearest of kin had first rights with respect to the wife and any property which might be involved. **4.1-6:** The nearer kinsman renounces his rights. **1:** *The gate* of the city was the normal place for transacting business (see Jos.20.4 n.). **5:** Boaz tells his rival that he cannot legally acquire the property without also marrying Ruth. **6:** The kinsman refuses to accept the property under these conditions, because to raise up a son in the name of another would confuse the whole question of the inheritance of the estate. **7:** The custom here attested is somewhat different from that prescribed in Dt.25.7-10, either because the situation is more complicated than the one envisaged there or because the passages represent different stages in the development of Hebrew law. **7-12:** Boaz lays formal claim both to the property in question and to Ruth. **12:** *Perez . . . Tamar . . . Judah*, Gen. ch. 38.

of his native place; you are witnesses this day.” ¹¹ Then all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you prosper in Eph’rathah and be renowned in Bethlehem; ¹² and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the children that the LORD will give you by this young woman.”

¹³ So Bo’az took Ruth and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Na’omi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next of kin; and may his name be

renowned in Israel! ¹⁵ He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.” ¹⁶ Then Na’omi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. ¹⁷ And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Na’omi.” They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸ Now these are the descendants of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron, ¹⁹ Hezron of Ram, Ram of Ammin’adab, ²⁰ Ammin’adab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon, ²¹ Salmon of Bo’az, Bo’az of Obed, ²² Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.

4.13-22: Ruth the ancestress of David. **18:** *The descendants of Perez*, compare Mt.1.3-6.

SAMUEL

The two books of Samuel were originally one in Hebrew. There are three principal characters in the two books: Samuel, Saul, and David. The story of Samuel is confined to 1 Samuel, as is also the story of Saul, except for the report of his death at the beginning of 2 Samuel. The story of David begins midway in 1 Samuel (ch. 16), continues through 2 Samuel, and is completed in the second chapter of 1 Kings.

There are two main literary strands of thought interwoven in 1 Samuel; they are usually referred to as the Early Source and the Late Source. The Late Source, with which the book begins, is basically an interpretation of the life of Samuel, beginning with his birth in ch. 1 and ending with his death in ch. 25. The leading ideas of this source are (1) that Samuel was the judge and true ruler of Israel under God (see 7.7-17); (2) that the choosing of a king was really a mistake (see 8.10-22; 12.19); (3) that the personal failure of such figures as Eli and his sons and Saul was owing to sin against God (see 2.25; 13.13-14); (4) that David, in spite of his being a king, was a man who merited God's favor (see 13.14; 16.13; 24.16-21). This source was compiled in the latter days of the monarchy (750-650 B.C.).

The Early Source, most of which was probably written by a single individual during the reign of Solomon, is of such remarkable historical and literary quality that its author deserves the title "the father of history"—a title usually given to the Greek historian Herodotus, who lived five hundred years later. As is the case with so many of the Biblical writings, the identity of the author of this unusual document is unknown, though Abiathar (1 Sam. 22.20-23; 1 Kg. 2.26) and Ahimaaz (2 Sam. 18.19-32) have been mentioned as candidates for the honor. In the Early Source the establishment of the kingship is regarded as a divinely ordained blessing and the salvation of the nation. Samuel is a less important figure, a modest prophet, not a ruler in his own right. Saul is a noble but tragic figure. David is the real hero, but a very human hero, who does both noble and ignoble deeds, the latter being in no way disguised by the author. Second Samuel is made up almost entirely of the Early Source, and it could very well have been called "the book of David."

The final editing of the books of Samuel took place in the post-exilic period. Much of the work of putting the books into their present form was done by the Deuteronomic school of theologians (which was also largely responsible for the compilation and editing of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Kings), whose ideas were similar to those reflected in the Late Source. They probably rewrote 1 Sam. ch. 12 and contributed 2 Sam. ch. 8. Still other editors added 1 Sam. 2.1-10, 27-36; 2 Sam. ch. 7; ch. 22; 23.1-7. Each of the differing interpretations of the monarchy has its value; taken together, they enable us to understand well how God protected his people and established them as a community that was ultimately religious rather than merely national (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands." §§ 8-9).

THERE WAS A CERTAIN MAN OF Eli'hu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ramatha'im-zo'phim of the hill E'phraimite. ² He had two wives; the country of E'phraim, whose name was name of the one was Hannah, and the Elka'nah the son of Jero'ham, son of name of the other Penin'nah. And

1.1-28: The birth and consecration of Samuel. The story of a formerly barren woman who bears unusual offspring late in life as a special favor from God appears several times in the Bible. Besides Hannah, note Sarah (Gen. 17.16-19), Rebekah (Gen. 25.21-26), Rachel (Gen. 29.31; 30.22-24), the mother of Samson (Jg. 13.2-5), and Elizabeth (Lk. 1.5-17). The unusual birth was thought to be symbolic of the importance of the person in later life. **1:** The Greek version begins thus: "There was a certain man of Ramah, a Zuphite of the hill country . . ."; comparison with v. 19 shows that Ramah was probably the familiar name of the place. **2:** Two wives, bigamy was not common in Old Testament times, but was allowed (Dt. 21.15-17).

Penin'nah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phin'ehas, were priests of the LORD. ⁴ On the day when Elka'nah sacrificed, he would give portions to Penin'nah his wife and to all her sons and daughters; ⁵ and, although^a he loved Hannah, he would give Hannah only one portion, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶ And her rival used to provoke her sorely, to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷ So it went on year by year; as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸ And Elka'nah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

9 After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. ¹¹ And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant, and remember me, and not forget thy maidservant, but wilt give to thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

12 As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.

¹³ Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard; therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴ And Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine from you." ¹⁵ But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman sorely troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not regard your maidservant as a base woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." ¹⁷ Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have made to him." ¹⁸ And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her countenance was no longer sad.

19 They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elka'nah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her; ²⁰ and in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD."

21 And the man Elka'nah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and abide there for ever."

²³ Elka'nah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until

^a Gk: Heb obscure

3: The original meaning of the expression *LORD of hosts* is "LORD of armies" or "God of battles," referring to God's leadership of his people in war. There was an important shrine at *Shiloh* in the days before the monarchy (Jos.18.1; Jg.21.19; Jer.7.12; Ps.78.60). We should read (with the Greek version), "Eli and his two sons"; it is evident from later verses that Eli had not retired. 9-18: Hannah went to the temple and prayed for a son, promising to consecrate him to God's service if her prayer was granted. 19-28: The prayer was answered and the promise fulfilled. The Hebrew word for *asked* in v. 20 seems to be a play on the meaning of the name "Saul" rather than *Samuel*, which probably means "name of God," suggesting the boy's close affinity with God. There may be some confusion between Saul and Samuel here; but the word *asked* in Hebrew also means "borrowed," so perhaps this word should be connected with the word *lent* in v. 28; Hannah had begged or borrowed (same word in Hebrew) her son from God, so she *lent* him back to God, by whose grace he had been granted (see 2.20).

you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. ²⁴ And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,^b an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine; and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slew the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me my petition which I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

And they^x worshiped the LORD there.

2 Hannah also prayed and said,
 “My heart exults in the LORD;
 my strength is exalted in the LORD.
 My mouth derides my enemies,
 because I rejoice in thy salvation.

² “There is none holy like the LORD,
 there is none besides thee;
 there is no rock like our God.

³ Talk no more so very proudly,
 let not arrogance come from your
 mouth;

for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
 and by him actions are weighed.

⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken,
 but the feeble gird on strength.

⁵ Those who were full have hired
 themselves out for bread,
 but those who were hungry have
 ceased to hunger.

The barren has borne seven,
 but she who has many children
 is forlorn.

⁶ The LORD kills and brings to life;
 he brings down to Sheol and
 raises up.

⁷ The LORD makes poor and makes
 rich;
 he brings low, he also exalts.

⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust;
 he lifts the needy from the ash
 heap,
 to make them sit with princes
 and inherit a seat of honor.

For the pillars of the earth are the
 LORD's,
 and on them he has set the world.

⁹ “He will guard the feet of his
 faithful ones;
 but the wicked shall be cut off in
 darkness;
 for not by might shall a man
 prevail.

¹⁰ The adversaries of the LORD shall

b Gk Syr: Heb three bulls *x* Heb he

2.1-10: The song of Hannah. It was the custom of Biblical editors to insert poems into prose books to increase artistic and religious appeal. The poems may be older or later than the contexts into which they are inserted. In this case the poem seems to be considerably later. It is really a psalm of national thanksgiving, and has a certain appropriateness at this point; but perhaps its greatest claim to fame is that it became the model for Mary's song of thanksgiving (the Magnificat) in the New Testament (Lk.1.46-55). **1:** *My strength*, literally “my horn,” the figure of an animal tossing its head. The *I* of this psalm, as of many others, is the nation as well as the individual worshiper. The group and the individual are often identified in the Bible in a way strange to modern thinking. **2:** *Rock*, 2 Sam.22.2-3; Pss.18.2; 28.1; 62.2,6; etc. **3:** The enemies of Israel are addressed. **4:** The reversal of fortune for the downtrodden and oppressed (also vv. 5,8); compare Ps.113.7-9. **5:** *The barren has borne seven*, this line probably suggested the insertion of the poem at this place. *Seven* is merely symbolic of a sizable family; Hannah seems not to have had more than six children (see v. 21). **6-7:** God controls all of life. *Brings to life* probably refers to birth rather than to resurrection from the dead; likewise the next line probably refers to deep trouble or desperate injuries and recovery from them. *Sheol*, the place of the dead under the earth, like Hades among the Greeks (Is.14.9-21); but the term is sometimes used of conditions near death (Pss.86.13; 88.3-7). **8:** *Pillars of the earth*; the earth was conceived of as a platform resting on great pillars. **9:** The idea that the good would prosper and the wicked suffer ill fortune in this world was widespread in the post-exilic period (see Pr.3.9-10; 5.22-23); the books of Job and Ecclesiastes are a protest against this view of life.

be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in
heaven.

The LORD will judge the ends of the
earth;

he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his
anointed.”

11 Then Elka'nah went home to
Ramah. And the boy ministered to the
LORD, in the presence of Eli the priest.

12 Now the sons of Eli were worth-
less men; they had no regard for the
LORD. ¹³ The custom of the priests
with the people was that when any man
offered sacrifice, the priest's servant
would come, while the meat was boil-
ing, with a three-pronged fork in his
hand, ¹⁴ and he would thrust it into
the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot;
all that the fork brought up the
priest would take for himself.^c So they
did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who
came there. ¹⁵ Moreover, before the
fat was burned, the priest's servant
would come and say to the man who
was sacrificing, “Give meat for the
priest to roast; for he will not accept
boiled meat from you, but raw.”

¹⁶ And if the man said to him, “Let
them burn the fat first, and then take
as much as you wish,” he would say,
“No, you must give it now; and if not,
I will take it by force.” ¹⁷ Thus the sin
of the young men was very great in
the sight of the LORD; for the men
treated the offering of the LORD
with contempt.

18 Samuel was ministering before

the LORD, a boy girded with a linen
ephod. ¹⁹ And his mother used to make
for him a little robe and take it to him
each year, when she went up with her
husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.
²⁰ Then Eli would bless Elka'nah
and his wife, and say, “The LORD
give you children by this woman for
the loan which she lent to^d the LORD”;
so then they would return to their
home.

21 And the LORD visited Hannah,
and she conceived and bore three
sons and two daughters. And the
boy Samuel grew in the presence of the
LORD.

22 Now Eli was very old, and he
heard all that his sons were doing to all
Israel, and how they lay with the
women who served at the entrance to
the tent of meeting. ²³ And he said to
them, “Why do you do such things?
For I hear of your evil dealings from all
the people. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is no
good report that I hear the people of
the LORD spreading abroad. ²⁵ If a
man sins against a man, God will
mediate for him; but if a man sins
against the LORD, who can intercede
for him?” But they would not listen to
the voice of their father; for it was the
will of the LORD to slay them.

26 Now the boy Samuel continued
to grow both in stature and in favor
with the LORD and with men.

27 And there came a man of God to
Eli, and said to him, “Thus the LORD

^c Gk Syr Vg: Heb with it
^d Or for the petition which she asked of

10: For God as the final judge of all, see Ps.98.9. *His king* and *his anointed* could refer to the historical monarchy, but more probably they look forward to the new David, the ideal king of the future (see 10.1 n.).

2.12-26: The sons of Eli. The Late Source continues at this point. The evil conduct of the sons of Eli contrasts with the growing spirituality of Samuel (vv. 21,26 and ch. 3). **18:** The *linen ephod* was a light ceremonial garment covering only the front of the body (2 Sam.6.14); it is sometimes referred to as an apron. Later the priests wore a more elaborate ephod (Ex.28.5-14). **20:** See 1.19-28 n. **22:** The *tent of meeting* seems to be an error here, for the sanctuary at Shiloh was a building, not a tent. Perhaps there is some confusion with Ex.38.8. **25:** *It was the will of the LORD to slay them* is a theological way of saying that they were incorrigible, and therefore God had to punish them.

2.27-36: The condemnation of the house of Eli. This is an interruption of the Late Source by the insertion of a prose passage designed to justify the exclusion of Abiathar and his descend-ants from the priesthood in favor of Zadok and his descendants (1 Kg.2.27,35; see 3.11-14 n.).

has said, 'I revealed^e myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh.

²⁸ And I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me; and I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. ²⁹ Why then look with greedy eye at^f my sacrifices and my offerings which I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves upon the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?" ³⁰ Therefore the LORD the God of Israel declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me for ever'; but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me; for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹ Behold, the days are coming, when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. ³² Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity which shall be bestowed upon Israel; and there shall not be an old man in your house for ever. ³³ The man of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep out his^g eyes and grieve his^g heart; and all the increase of your house shall die by the sword of men.^h ³⁴ And this which shall befall your two sons, Hophni and Phin'ehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. ³⁵ And I will raise up for myself a faith-

ful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed for ever. ³⁶ And every one who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread, and shall say, "Put me, I pray you, in one of the priest's places, that I may eat a morsel of bread." ' "

3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!"ⁱ and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶ And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli per-

^e Gk Tg: Heb *Did I reveal*

^f Or *treat with scorn* Gk: Heb *kick at*

^g Gk: Heb *your* ^h Gk: Heb *die as men*

ⁱ Gk See 3.10: Heb *the LORD called Samuel*

Eli was an ancestor of Abiathar, according to the writer of this passage, and the sins of the fathers (Eli and his sons) were visited upon the children (Dt.5.9). **27:** *Your father* refers to Aaron. **28:** *An ephod*, see v. 18 n. **33:** *The man* is Abiathar, the only one to escape at Nob (1 Sam.22.18-23; 1 Kg.2.26-27). **35:** *The faithful priest* is Zadok (2 Sam.8.17; 15.24; 1 Kg.1.8; 2.35). *My anointed* refers to the king, real or ideal (see v. 10 n.).

3.1-4.1a: God's first revelation to Samuel. The continuation of the Late Source from 2.26. According to Jewish tradition Samuel was twelve years old at this time, the age of Jesus when he discoursed in the temple at Jerusalem (Lk.2.40-52). These beautiful stories of the birth and childhood of Samuel were in the mind of Luke as he began the writing of his Gospel (see 2.1-10 n.). **1:** *Word and vision* here are essentially the same thing—a revelation from God. **3:** *The lamp of God* burned all night (Ex.27.21); hence the time was just before dawn. The *lamp* was near the *ark of God*, the portable shrine or chest symbolizing the presence and power of the Deity. Its early form was simple, but in later conception it became highly ornate (Ex.25.10-22; 37.1-9). The simple early form plays an important part in the story that follows in the next section.

ceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for thy servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ And the LORD came and stood forth, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant hears." ¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel, at which the two ears of every one that hears it will tingle. ¹² On that day I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³ And I tell him that I am about to punish his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God,^j and he did not restrain them. ¹⁴ Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering for ever."

¹⁵ Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁶ But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." ¹⁷ And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you."

¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It

is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."

¹⁹ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD. ¹ And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines; they encamped at Ebene'zer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek. ² The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who slew about four thousand men on the field of battle. ³ And when the troops came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD put us to rout today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that he may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies." ⁴ So the people sent to Shiloh, and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phin'ehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

⁵ When the ark of the covenant of

j Another reading is for themselves

11-14: These verses may have suggested the insertion of 2.27-36 above. It was necessary that God's first revelation to Samuel should be a tragic one. God must chasten as well as offer salvation. **4.1a:** *Word* here probably means "reputation"; Samuel became known and trusted throughout all the land as a man who spoke for God.

4.1b-7.2: The beginning of the war with the Philistines. The great body of literary material known as the Early Source begins here (see Introduction). The first sentence of this section of the Greek version tells us that *the Philistines* took the lead in the war by mustering their forces against the Israelites. For the origin of the Philistines, see Jg.13.1 n.; Am.9.7 n. At the time this story begins (about 1050 B.C.) the Philistines apparently had decided that they were strong enough to attack the Israelites and perhaps to take over the whole land. Thus begins for the Israelites a life-and-death struggle. Samuel is not mentioned in this section; one might almost say that *the ark*, rather than any person, is here the center of the author's attention.

4.1b-22: The defeat of Israel and capture of the ark. The strategy of the Philistines was to drive up the coast, then down the plain of Esdraelon to the Jordan river, thus cutting communication between the parts of Israel north and south of the plain. By the end of 1 Samuel this strategy has succeeded, though in the meantime there were attempts to penetrate Israelite territory farther south. **3-4:** *Ark of the covenant*, see 3.3 n. *The LORD of hosts*, see 1.3 n. *Who is enthroned on the cherubim*, 2 Sam.6.2; 2 Kg.19.15; Pss.80.1; 99.1; etc. *Cherubim*, see Gen.

the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. ⁶ And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, ⁷ the Philistines were afraid; for they said, "A god has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. ⁸ Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. ⁹ Take courage, and acquit yourselves like men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; acquit yourselves like men and fight."

¹⁰ So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home; and there was a very great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. ¹¹ And the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phin'eas, were slain.

¹² A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent and with earth upon his head. ¹³ When he arrived, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the

man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out. ¹⁴ When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, "What is this uproar?" Then the man hastened and came and told Eli. ¹⁵ Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set, so that he could not see. ¹⁶ And the man said to Eli, "I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today." And he said, "How did it go, my son?"

¹⁷ He who brought the tidings answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great slaughter among the people; your two sons also, Hophni and Phin'eas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured." ¹⁸ When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

¹⁹ Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phin'eas, was with child, about to give birth. And when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth; for her pains came upon her. ²⁰ And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, "Fear not, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer or give heed. ²¹ And she named the

3.24 n. In Phoenicia the king was sometimes represented as sitting on a throne supported by cherubim; the translators here suggest that the LORD God of Israel is similarly *enthroned*. Another interpretation is that God "dwells in the cherubim." There is no necessary implication that cherubim formed a part of this early, simple ark.

4.5-11: The loss of the ark. 6: The word *Hebrews* in the earlier parts of the Old Testament is nearly always used by non-Israelites as a term of contempt (compare Gen.39.14; 43.32); the Israelites seldom use it of themselves. Only later could Jonah and Paul say proudly, "I am a Hebrew" (Jon.1.9; Phil.3.5). 7,8: The plural expression *gods* would seem to imply that the Philistines had no conception of how the Israelites worshiped only one God (but compare 5.7,8,10,11). Since the plagues occurred in Egypt, either the phrase "in the wilderness" was added by mistake, or the author is making sport of the ignorance of the Philistines. 10: Most ancient documents, Biblical and non-Biblical, are less exact with regard to numbers than are modern writings.

4.12-18: The death of Eli. 13: *By the road*; the reading of the Greek version, "by the gate" (presumably the door of the temple), is preferable (1.9). 18: *He had judged Israel forty years*, added by the Deuteronomic editor on the assumption that practically every prominent man in those days was a judge of all Israel (Jg.16.31). 19-22: The birth of Ichabod. The name *Ichabod* means "no glory" or "alas for the glory!" Many names in the Bible describe the circumstances

child Ich'abod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

5 When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they carried it from Ebene'zer to Ashdod; ² then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon. ³ And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. ⁴ But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. ⁵ This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

6 The hand of the LORD was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. ⁷ And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us;

for his hand is heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god." ⁸ So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." So they brought the ark of the God of Israel there. ⁹ But after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out upon them. ¹⁰ So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to slay us and our people." ¹¹ They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not slay us and our people." For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there; ¹² the men who did not die were stricken with tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

6 The ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. ² And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us with what we shall send

surrounding the bearer's birth or give an omen; compare the naming of Cain (Gen.4.1), Isaac ("laugh," Gen.21.3,6), the children of Jacob (Gen.30.6-24), Moses ("draw out," Ex.2.10), and Jesus ("save," Mt.1.21).

5.1-12: The ark troubles the Philistines. It is obvious that the early Israelites must have taken much delight in this primitive story of the power of the symbol of their God. **1:** *Ashdod* was one of the five principal Philistine towns (pentapolis), along with Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza (Jg.14.19 n.). **2:** *House* here means temple. *Dagon*, the principal deity of the Philistines (Jg.16.23), appears to have been borrowed, at least in name, from some of the surrounding Semitic peoples. The root meaning of the word was formerly thought to be "fish" (the Philistines being near the sea), but is now considered to be "grain." Hence Dagon is reckoned among the "fertility" deities that have to do with agricultural productivity. **5:** Leaping over the threshold was a common practice in primitive religions (Zeph.1.9), the doorsill being regarded with superstitious awe (compare the modern custom of carrying a bride over the threshold). The origins of the custom are very ancient, hence the explanation given here can hardly be correct. **6,9,12:** These tumors are generally considered to have been the swellings of the bubonic plague. **7,8,10,11:** The Philistines appear to understand that Israel has but one God.

6.1-7.2: The voluntary return of the ark. The Philistines, attributing the plague to the presence of the ark, make arrangements to return it to its former owners. **3:** The Philistines wish to make

it to its place.”³ They said, “If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means return him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why his hand does not turn away from you.”⁴ And they said, “What is the guilt offering that we shall return to him?” They answered, “Five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines; for the same plague was upon all of you and upon your lords.”⁵ So you must make images of your tumors and images of your mice that ravage the land, and give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you and your gods and your land.⁶ Why should you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? After he had made sport of them, did not they let the people go, and they departed?⁷ Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows upon which there has never come a yoke, and yoke the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them.⁸ And take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart, and put in a box at its side the figures of gold, which you are returning to him as a guilt offering. Then send it off, and let it go its way.⁹ And watch; if it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-she’mesh, then it is he who has done us this great harm; but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us, it happened to us by chance.”

¹⁰ The men did so, and took two milch cows and yoked them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home.

¹¹ And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart; and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors.

¹² And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-she’mesh along one highway, lowing as they went; they turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-she’mesh.¹³ Now the people of Beth-she’mesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it.¹⁴ The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-she’mesh, and stopped there. A great stone was there; and they split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.¹⁵ And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was beside it, in which were the golden figures, and set them upon the great stone; and the men of Beth-she’mesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to the LORD.¹⁶ And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned that day to Ekron.

¹⁷ These are the golden tumors, which the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ash’kelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; ¹⁸ also the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified cities and unwalled villages. The great stone, beside which they set down the ark of the LORD, is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-she’mesh.

¹⁹ And he slew some of the men of

a guilt offering, to appease the God of Israel, who (so they thought) was angry. **4,5:** *Five golden tumors and five golden mice* were prepared. We learn from the Greek version (5.6 and 6.1) that the plague was accompanied by swarms of mice. Bubonic plague is usually spread by a flea carried by rats. The Philistines may have been correct in connecting the disease with these “mice” (probably rats). By sending away images of the troublesome objects they hoped, by a process of sympathetic magic, to be rid of the troubles themselves; and they hoped that *the God of Israel* would be pleased by their generosity in making the images of gold. **6:** *To harden your hearts* means to “make your minds stubborn” (Ex.8.19,32). **9:** *Beth-shemesh* was probably the nearest important Israelite town to Ekron, where the ark was prior to its return. **15:** This verse was inserted by a priestly editor to make the procedure conform to later requirements. The Levites did not begin to function as priestly assistants until later times. **17:** See 5.1 n.

Beth-she'mesh, because they looked into the ark of the LORD; he slew seventy men of them,^k and the people mourned because the LORD had made a great slaughter among the people.²⁰ Then the men of Beth-she'mesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?"²¹ So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kir'ath-jé'arim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD.

7 Come down and take it up to you."¹ And the men of Kir'ath-jé'arim came and took up the ark of the LORD, and brought it to the house of Abin'adab on the hill; and they consecrated his son, Elea'zar, to have charge of the ark of the LORD.² From the day that the ark was lodged at Kir'ath-jé'arim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3 Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ash'taroth from among you, and direct your heart to the LORD, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."⁴ So Israel put away the Ba'als and the Ash'taroth, and they served the LORD only.

5 Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the

LORD for you."⁶ So they gathered at Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.⁷ Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it they were afraid of the Philistines.⁸ And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines."⁹ So Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.¹⁰ As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel; but the LORD thundered with a mighty voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion; and they were routed before Israel.¹¹ And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, as far as below Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshah'nah,^l and called its name Ebene'zer;^m for he said, "Hitherto the LORD has helped us."¹³ So the Philistines were

k Cn: Heb of the people seventy men, fifty thousand men
l Gk Syr: Heb Shen *m* That is Stone of help

19: The ungrammatical addition of the phrase "fifty thousand men" (see note *k*) shows how easily exaggerations could occur (see 4.10 n.). 21: The ark was taken to *Kiriath-jearim* probably because Shiloh had been destroyed in the meantime (Jer.7.12-14; 26.6-9). 7.2: The expression *lamented after the LORD* seems to mean, in the light of what follows, "implored the LORD for help."

7.3-17: Samuel as judge of all Israel. Samuel immediately comes to the fore, as the Late Source resumes. 3-4: Probably added by the Deuteronomic editor, who felt that the worship of false gods was always the chief sin of his people (Jg.2.11-15; 3.7; 10.6; 13.1; etc.). *The Baals and the Ashtaroth* (plural of Ashtoreth, the Hebrew word for Astarte, goddess of fertility and profane love) were the principal deities of the Canaanites, often worshiped also by the Israelites when they departed from the true faith. 5: Continuation of v. 2. 6: Libations of water were unusual (wine was used generally), but to people with a desert background water would be sufficiently precious. 9: A whole burnt offering, one that is entirely consumed (Ex.29.18; Lev.8.21; Dt.13.16; 33.10). Most burnt offerings were of this type; the use of the word *whole* emphasizes the importance of the occasion. 10: It is characteristic of the Late Source (and similar literary material) that battles are often won or lost by miraculous divine intervention. 13-14: These verses are probably by the Deuteronomic editor, for they are more extreme in their glorification of Samuel than even the Late Source. If Samuel had won the war in this

subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. ¹⁴ The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel rescued their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

¹⁵ Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. ¹⁶ And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all these places. ¹⁷ Then he would come back to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he administered justice to Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.

8 When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. ² The name of his first-born son was Jo'el, and the name of his second, Abi'jah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. ³ Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice.

⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵ and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations." ⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to govern us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD said to Samuel, "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected

me from being king over them. ⁸ According to all the deeds which they have done to me," from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. ⁹ Now then, hearken to their voice; only, you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

¹⁰ So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking a king from him. ¹¹ He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; ¹² and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. ¹⁵ He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. ¹⁶ He will take your menservants and maidservants, and the best of your cattleⁿ and your asses, and put them to his work. ¹⁷ He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. ¹⁸ And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have

ⁿ Gk: Heb lacks to me

^o Gk: Heb young men

fashion, there would have been no occasion at all for the rise of Saul and the other events that followed. Most of the other potential enemies of Israel besides the Philistines could be classified as *Amorites*. The final sentence of v. 14 makes Samuel's success as a temporal ruler complete. But he was not really a "judge" or military hero like those in the Book of Judges; he was more like a circuit judge in the ordinary sense of the word (compare vv. 16-17).

8.1-22: The people request a king. A continuation of the Late Source, showing the anti-monarchical tendency (see Introduction and 7.13-14 n.). Samuel dislikes the request, but after seeking God's will, he finds that he must yield, even though God himself feels offended. At God's behest Samuel delivers a severe lecture on the evils of kingship before yielding (vv. 9-18; compare Dt.17.14-20). The evils described here and in the Deuteronomy passage seem to be mainly those of the reign of Solomon, and it is probable that the resentment against the monarchy arose at this time and never ceased, becoming a part of the thought of many of the prophets and of the Deuteronomical writers.

chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No! but we will have a king over us, ²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." ²¹ And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. ²² And the LORD said to Samuel, "Hearken to their voice, and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

9 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abi'el, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphi'ah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth; ² and he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he; from his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

3 Now the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the asses." ⁴ And they^p passed through the hill country of E'phraim and passed through the land of Shal'ishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Sha'alim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the asses and become anxious about us." ⁶ But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man that is held in honor; all that he says comes true. Let us go there; perhaps he can tell us about the journey on which we have set out." ⁷ Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What have we?" ⁸ The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me the fourth part of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God, to tell us our way." ⁹ (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer"; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.) ¹⁰ And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

11 As they went up the hill to the city, they met young maidens coming out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?" ¹² They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Make haste; he has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place." ¹³ As soon as you enter the city, you will find him, before he goes up to the

p Gk Vg: Heb he

9.1-10.16: The secret choice of Saul. From the Early Source. Samuel appears here in the Early Source for the first time. He is not the judge or ruler of all Israel (7.5), but a more modest figure, a local *man of God* (9.6), a highly respected *seer* (9.11), that is, a clairvoyant (9.20; 10.2), and possibly a circuit judge, as depicted in the Late Source (7.16-17; compare 9.12). Most noteworthy in this section is the idea that the kingship is a splendid thing, a blessing from God voluntarily bestowed, and not a concession to the improper desires of the people (9.16; 10.1). Samuel himself seems immensely pleased with the idea of the kingship and his part in creating it (9.19-24), in contrast to his attitude in ch. 8. In other words, the Early Source is just as clearly pro-monarchical as the Late Source is anti-monarchical. It will soon appear also that the Early Source is friendly to Saul, whereas the Late Source is just the opposite. **9.2:** *Young man* here means "man in the prime of life," for Saul had grown children. **6:** *This city* may be Ramah (7.17). **7:** Saul appears not to have heard of Samuel; contrast 4.1a and 7.15. **8:** There was no coinage in those days; *the fourth part of a shekel* was merely a bit of silver of a certain weight (about one-eighth oz., worth about ten cents now, but much more then). **9:** A note by an editor, inserted after the word *seer* had gone out of use. **11-14:** The *city* was apparently a small walled town, lying on the side of a hill, with only one gate; the spring was below, *the high*

high place to eat; for the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those eat who are invited. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.”¹⁴ So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel:¹⁶ “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen the affliction of^q my people, because their cry has come to me.”¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall rule over my people.”

¹⁸ Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate, and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?”¹⁹ Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer; go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind.”²⁰ As for your asses that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father’s house?”

²¹ Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my family the humblest of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”

22 Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall

and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons.²³ And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Put it aside.’”²⁴ So the cook took up the leg and the upper portion” and set them before Saul; and Samuel said, “Seê, what was kept is set before you. Eat; because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests.”^s

So Saul ate with Samuel that day.²⁵ And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul^t upon the roof, and he lay down to sleep.²⁶ Then at the break of dawn^u Samuel called to Saul upon the roof, “Up, that I may send you on your way.” So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God.”

10 Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said, “Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their enemies round about. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince” over his heritage.² When you depart from me today you will meet two men by

^q Gk: Heb lacks the affliction of ^r Heb obscure

^s Cn: Heb saying, I have invited the people

^t Gk: Heb and he spoke with Saul

^u Gk: Heb and they arose early and at break of dawn

^w Gk: Heb lacks over his people Israel? And you shall . . . to be prince

place above. Samuel presided over the sacrificial meal as a sort of priest. Later, pagan practices developed at the high place shrines, and they were ordered to be destroyed (Dt.12.2-3; 2 Kg. 23.8-9). **19:** Perhaps Saul had been brooding over the oppression by the Philistines. **25:** Roofs in that part of the world were flat, with protecting parapets, as they still are. Hence they were and are well adapted for sleeping during the summer months, when no rain falls. **10.1:** The unguent used in anointing kings was olive oil. Though priests (Ex.29.7) and prophets (1 Kg. 19.16) were sometimes anointed, the ceremony was more relevant to the kingship, so that the king came to be called “the LORD’s anointed” (16.6; 24.6), or simply “the anointed one.” This title was applied to the ideal future king in the form “Messiah” in Hebrew, “Christos” in Greek (see Mt.1.16 n.). **2:** This site of *Rachel’s tomb* is in Benjamin, north of Jerusalem

Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, 'The asses which you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the asses and is anxious about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"' ³ Then you shall go on from there further and come to the oak of Tabor; three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three kids, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. ⁴ And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. ⁵ After that you shall come to Gib'e-ath-elohim,* where there is a garrison of the Philistines; and there, as you come to the city, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. ⁶ Then the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man. ⁷ Now when these signs meet you, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. ⁸ And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do."

⁹ When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all these signs came to pass that day. ¹⁰ When they came to Gib'e-ah,^z behold, a band of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came mightily

upon him, and he prophesied among them. ¹¹ And when all who knew him before saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" ¹² And a man of the place answered, "And who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" ¹³ When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

¹⁴ Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To seek the asses; and when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel." ¹⁵ And Saul's uncle said, "Pray, tell me what Samuel said to you." ¹⁶ And Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the asses had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything.

¹⁷ Now Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah; ¹⁸ and he said to the people of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' ¹⁹ But you have this day rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses; and you have said, 'No! but set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands."

²⁰ Then Samuel brought all the

x Or the hill of God z Or the hill

(Jer.31.15). Another tradition locates it south of Jerusalem near Bethlehem, at the site shown to tourists today (Gen.35.16; 48.7; Mt.2.16-18). **3:** *Going up to God* means "going up to offer sacrifice." **5:** The mention of the *garrison* (or *prefect*) of the *Philistines* is a reminder of the task that lay before Saul. **6:** To *prophesy* . . . and be turned into another man means here to dance ecstatically and be out of one's head, in the fashion of the so-called ecstatic prophecy of those days (19.23-24). This was to be a sort of initiatory religious experience for the new king. **9:** *God gave him another heart*, that is, made a new man of him. **11:** The change in Saul began to be noticed. **12:** The phrase, *And who is their father?*, is unintelligible and interrupts the sequence of thought, which is that people begin to suspect that Saul had a mission. **13:** *Came to the high place* should probably be translated simply *came home*.

10.17-27: *Saul chosen king by lot*. Resumption of Late Source. We see again the anti-monarchical tendency of the Late Source. Samuel proceeds reluctantly (see v. 19), in contrast to 9.19-24. The story told here follows naturally upon ch. 8, and has the same point of view.

tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. ²¹ He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its families, and the family of the Matrites was taken by lot; finally he brought the family of the Matrites near man by man,^a and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found. ²² So they inquired again of the LORD, "Did the man come hither?"^b and the LORD said, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage." ²³ Then they ran and fetched him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. ²⁴ And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

²⁵ Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship; and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home. ²⁶ Saul also went to his home at Gib'e-ah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched. ²⁷ But some worthless fellows said, "How can this man save us?" And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

Then Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Ja'besh-gil'ead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you." ² But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make a treaty with you,

that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus put disgrace upon all Israel." ³ The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you." ⁴ When the messengers came to Gib'e-ah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people; and all the people wept aloud.

⁵ Now Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen; and Saul said, "What ails the people, that they are weeping?" So they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. ⁶ And the spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled. ⁷ He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. ⁸ When he mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. ⁹ And they said to the messengers who had come, "Thus shall you say to the men of Ja'besh-gil'ead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have deliverance.'" When the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, they were glad. ¹⁰ Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, and you may do

^a Gk: Heb lacks finally . . . man by man

^b Gk: Heb Is there yet a man to come hither?

21: The clan of the *Matrites* is not mentioned elsewhere. **21-22:** These verses seem to reflect on Saul unfavorably. **25:** This verse may be an editorial preparation for ch. 12. The mention of a *book* is designed to show Samuel as a man of letters as well as priest, prophet, and judge. We know nothing more of this book. **26-27:** These verses, which also may be editorial, reflect both favorable and unfavorable opinion about Saul.

11.1-15: Saul proves himself able to lead in battle and is publicly made king. This chapter, from the Early Source, logically follows 10.16, portraying the opportunity for which Saul had been advised to be ready (10.1). The Ammonites to the east (Gen.19.38; Num.21.24; Dt.2.37; Jg.10.9) were not so dangerous to national security as the Philistines, but a victory over them would show Saul capable of meeting the stronger enemy on the west, and also free Israel from having to fight on two fronts. **1:** *Jabesh-gilead*, an Israelite town east of the Jordan. **7:** Sending around the *pieces* of a sacrifice was a call to war (Jg.19.29). **8:** *Bezek* was between Shechem and

to us whatever seems good to you."

¹¹ And on the morrow Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and cut down the Ammonites until the heat of the day; and those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

¹² Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is it that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." ¹³ But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has wrought deliverance in Israel." ¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingdom." ¹⁵ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

12 And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have hearkened to your voice in all that you have said to me, and have made a king over you. ² And now, behold, the king walks before you; and I am old and gray, and behold, my sons are with you; and I have walked before you from my youth until this day. ³ Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me^c and I will restore it to you." ⁴ They said, "You have not de-

frauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." ⁵ And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."

⁶ And Samuel said to the people, "The LORD is witness,^d who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. ⁷ Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the saving deeds of the LORD which he performed for you and for your fathers. ⁸ When Jacob went into Egypt and the Egyptians oppressed them,^e then your fathers cried to the LORD and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. ⁹ But they forgot the LORD their God; and he sold them into the hand of Sis'era, commander of the army of Jabin king of^f Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them. ¹⁰ And they cried to the LORD, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served the Ba'als and the Ash'taro^h; but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.' ¹¹ And the LORD sent Jerubba'al and Barak,^g and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt

^c Gk: Heb lacks *Testify against me*

^d Gk: Heb lacks *is witness*

^e Gk: Heb lacks *and the Egyptians oppressed them*

^f Gk: Heb lacks *Jabin king of*

^g Gk Syr: Heb *Bedan*

Beth-shan. On the numbers see 4.10 n. ¹¹: Their day began at sundown, hence *on the morrow* would mean "that evening" in our reckoning. Apparently the Israelites marched all night to attack by surprise in the morning. ¹⁴: Probably editorial, for, according to the Early Source, Saul's kingship had not previously been publicly proclaimed.

12.1-25: Samuel's farewell address. Late Source with Deuteronomistic editing. This chapter logically follows 10.17-27 (compare ch. 8), though there are certain adjustments to ch. 11 (compare 12.12). Most ancient historical documents, Biblical and non-Biblical alike, contain speeches written at a time later than the events of the narrative, but regarded as appropriate to the occasion. This chapter is an excellent example of such literary material. **2:** The misconduct of the sons is not mentioned here (compare 8.3). **2,5:** The expression *his anointed* refers to the king (see 10.1 n.). **9,10,11:** Note the similarity to the Deuteronomistic framework of the Book of Judges; e.g. Jg.4.2-3. *The Baals and the Ashtaroth*, see 7.3-4 n. In v. 11 *Samuel* is listed as the

in safety. ¹² And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God was your king.

¹³ And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you. ¹⁴ If you will fear the LORD and serve him and hearken to his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well; ¹⁵ but if you will not hearken to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.^h ¹⁶ Now therefore stand still and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. ¹⁷ Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain; and you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for yourselves a king." ¹⁸ So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

¹⁹ And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king."²⁰ And Samuel said to the people, "Fear not; you have done all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; ²¹ and do not turn aside afterⁱ vain

things which cannot profit or save, for they are vain. ²² For the LORD will not cast away his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself. ²³ Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. ²⁴ Only fear the LORD, and serve him faithfully with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you. ²⁵ But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

13 Saul was . . . ^j years old when he began to reign; and he reigned . . . and two^k years over Israel.

² Saul chose three thousand men of Israel; two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gib'e-ah of Benjamin; the rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent. ³ Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines which was at Geba; and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." ⁴ And all Israel heard it said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines. And the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal.

⁵ And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and

^h Gk: Heb fathers

ⁱ Gk Syr Tg Vg: Heb because after

^j The number is lacking in Heb

^k Two is not the entire number. Something has dropped out.

last of the judges, the idea being that as long as he was alive no king was necessary. **14, 15, 24, 25:** This philosophy of divine retribution is more fully developed in Dt. ch. 28 and Jg. 2.11-23. **16-19:** The author wishes to show that Samuel was still in greater favor with God than was the king. *Rain during the wheat harvest* would be like "snow in summer" (Pr. 26.1). This harvest took place in early summer, when no rain could be expected until autumn. Thus it is a miracle, the *thunder* making it more impressive. The miracle story is the writer's way of making a theological point. If one accepts the Biblical writers in their own time and in their own ways of thinking, the message of no Biblical writer need be lost.

13.1-7a: Saul begins the war with the Philistines. The Early Source. Saul's son Jonathan made the first move. **1:** Saul's age at this time is not known. Some suppose that he reigned twelve years, others put the figure at twenty-two (see note *k*). **5:** *Beth-aven*, probably an alternative name for Bethel. **7:** *Fords of the Jordan*, see Jg. 12.5. *Gad and Gilead*, Transjordan.

troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude; they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-a'ven. ⁶ When the men of Israel saw that they were in straits (for the people were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns, ⁷ or crossed the fords of the Jordan^l to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

⁸ He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. ⁹ So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. ¹⁰ As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and salute him. ¹¹ Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, ¹² I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down upon me at Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of the LORD'; so I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering." ¹³ And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you; for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel for ever. ¹⁴ But now your king-

dom shall not continue; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart; and the LORD has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." ¹⁵ And Samuel arose, and went up from Gilgal to Gib'e-ah of Benjamin.

And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. ¹⁶ And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people who were present with them, stayed in Geba of Benjamin; but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. ¹⁷ And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies; one company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shu'al, ¹⁸ another company turned toward Beth-hor'on, and another company turned toward the border that looks down upon the valley of Zebo'im toward the wilderness.

¹⁹ Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears"; ²⁰ but every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle;^m ²¹ and the charge was a pim for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads.ⁿ ²² So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any

^l Cn: Heb *Hebrews crossed the Jordan*

^m Gk: Heb *plowshare*

ⁿ The Heb of this verse is obscure

13.7b-15a: Saul's ritual sin and rejection by God. This passage is an interruption of the Early Source by a writer even more hostile to Saul than the Late Source (see ch. 15 for the Late Source's version of the rejection). The thought is that the king had no right to exercise priestly functions, or at least Saul had no such right. Contrast the very different view of the Early Source in 14.31-35, where Saul definitely assists in priestly functions. Later David (2 Sam.6.12-19; 24.25) and Solomon (1 Kg.3.15) also exercised such functions. The *man after his [God's] own heart* (v. 14) is David. **8:** *The time appointed by Samuel*, see 10.8. No reason for Samuel's delay is given.

13.15b-14.52: Continuation of the Philistine War. The Early Source. **15b:** The words, *And Saul numbered the people . . .*, follow directly on the words *to the land of Gad and Gilead* in v. 7a. The Israelites had scattered and only *six hundred* fighting men (a realistic estimate) remained with Saul. **19-22:** These verses are by an editor who conceived the situation to be worse than it really was. The age of iron was just beginning in Palestine; the Philistines were superior to the Israelites in material culture, but the latter overcame the deficiency and eventually won the war. A *shekel* (about eleven and one-half grams) of silver would be worth about fifty cents;

of the people with Saul and Jonathan; but Saul and Jonathan his son had them.²³ And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

14 One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on yonder side." But he did not tell his father.² Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gib'e-ah under the pomegranate tree which is at Migron; the people who were with him were about six hundred men,³ and Ahi'jah the son of Ahi'tub, Ich'abod's brother, son of Phin'ehas, son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.⁴ In the pass,^o by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side; the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.⁵ The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us; for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few."⁷ And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that your mind inclines to;^p behold, I am with you, as is your mind so is mine."^q ⁸ Then said Jonathan, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them."⁹ If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go

up to them.¹⁰ But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up; for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us."¹¹ So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines; and the Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hid themselves."¹² And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me; for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel."¹³ Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him;¹⁴ and that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was of about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre^r of land.¹⁵ And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and even the raiders trembled; the earth quaked; and it became a very great panic.

16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gib'e-ah of Benjamin looked; and behold, the multitude was surging hither and thither.^s ¹⁷ Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Number and see who has gone from us." And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there.¹⁸ And Saul said to Ahi'jah, "Bring hither the ark of God." For the ark of God went at that time

^o Heb between the passes

^p Gk: Heb Do all that is in your mind. Turn

^q Gk: Heb lacks so is mine ^r Heb yoke

^s Gk: Heb they went and thither

the *pim* was two-thirds of a shekel. With v. 22 compare Jg.5.8. **14.1-5:** Jonathan again takes the lead in forcing the fighting. **3:** *Wearing an ephod*, translate "carrying an ephod," for this was not the *linen ephod* of 2.18, but a box containing Urim and Thummim, the sacred objects for determining the divine will by lot (v. 41; see Ex.28.30 n.). **6-15:** Jonathan's bravery leads to victory. *Uncircumcised* (v. 6) and *Hebrews* (v. 11) are used as uncomplimentary terms (see 4.6 n.). The Israelites, along with the other Semitic peoples to the east, such as the Amorites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, practiced circumcision (see Jer.9.25 n.). The non-Semitic Philistines, coming from the west (see 4.1b n.), had no such custom. **11:** *Hebrews*, see 4.6 n. **16-23:** Saul capitalizes on the advantage gained by Jonathan. **18:** Instead of *the ark of God*, the Greek version reads "the ephod" (compare ephod vv. 3,41). **19:** *Withdraw your hand*, the

with the people of Israel. ¹⁹ And while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more; and Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." ²⁰ Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle; and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. ²¹ Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with^t the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. ²² Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hid themselves in the hill country of E'phraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle. ²³ So the LORD delivered Israel that day; and the battle passed beyond Beth-a'ven.

²⁴ And the men of Israel were distressed that day; for Saul laid an oath on the people, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. ²⁵ And all the people^u came into the forest; and there was honey on the ground. ²⁶ And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, but no man put his hand to his mouth; for the people feared the oath. ²⁷ But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; so he put forth the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes became bright. ²⁸ Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint. ²⁹ Then

Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land; see how my eyes have become bright, because I tasted a little of this honey. ³⁰ How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found; for now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great."

³¹ They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Ai'jalon. And the people were very faint; ³² the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood. ³³ Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD, by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here." ³⁴ And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Let every man bring his ox or his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slew them there. ³⁵ And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

³⁶ Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and despoil them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." But the priest said, "Let us draw near hither to God." ³⁷ And Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou give them into the hand of Israel?" But he did not answer him that day. ³⁸ And Saul said, "Come hither, all you leaders of the people; and know and see how this sin has arisen today. ³⁹ For as the

^t Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *round about, they also, to be with*
^u Heb *land* ^v Gk: Heb *this day*

priest had begun the casting of the Urim and Thummim. **21:** *Hebrews* and *Israelites* are not necessarily identical peoples here. Perhaps we can say that not all Hebrews were Israelites, since the former was the broader term. **24-30:** Fasting was supposed to be pleasing to God. Saul hoped thus to further his cause, but he was remiss in not seeing that Jonathan was informed. **31-35:** Saul rather than the priests seems to have been in charge of the religious rites (contrast the attitude of the Late Source, 13.7b-15a). The law against partaking of the blood appears in Lev.19.26; Dt.12.16. **36-37:** Saul wanted to press his advantage, but the priest sensed that

LORD lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. ⁴⁰ Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you." ⁴¹ Therefore Saul said, "O LORD God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O LORD, God of Israel, give Urim; but if this guilt is in thy people Israel," give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. ⁴² Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken.

⁴³ Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand; here I am, I will die." ⁴⁴ And Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan." ⁴⁵ Then the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has wrought this great victory in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he has wrought with God this day." So the people ransomed Jonathan, that he did not die. ⁴⁶ Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place.

⁴⁷ When Saul had taken the king-

ship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines; wherever he turned he put them to the worse. ⁴⁸ And he did valiantly, and smote the Amal'ekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

⁴⁹ Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Mal'chishu'a; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the first-born was Merab, and the name of the younger Michal; ⁵⁰ and the name of Saul's wife was Ahin'o-am the daughter of Ahim'a-az. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle; ⁵¹ Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abi'el.

⁵² There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.

15 LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore hearken to the words of the LORD. ² Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish what Am'alek did to Israel in opposing them on the way, when they came up out of Egypt. ³ Now go and smite Am'alek, and utterly destroy all

^w Vg Compare Gk: Heb *Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel*

something was wrong and suggested use of the sacred lots, *Urim* and *Thummim*. **43-46:** Presumably the ransom took the form of the substitution of an animal (Gen.22.13; Ex.13.13; 34.20). Verse 46 shows this point to be the end of a phase of the war. **47-48,49-51,52:** A series of three editorial notes, summarizing the public and private situation of Saul at this time. Observe how favorably Saul is presented, especially in the first note (vv. 47-48). Verse 52 prepares for the resumption of the Early Source at 16.14.

15.1-35: Another story of Saul's rejection. The Late Source. Compare this section with 13.7b-15a and contrast with the preceding section. Samuel, not Saul, is the leading figure once more. Though Saul is king, and wins a military victory, he is depicted as a moral and religious reprobate, unworthy of the position he holds. **2:** *Amalek* (or the Amalekites) is the name of a people traditionally descended from Esau (Gen.36.12). They were a wandering tribe from southern Canaan or northern Sinai which had been constantly troublesome to the Israelites (Dt. 25.17-19; Ex.17.7-13; Jg.6.33). **3:** This verse seems to pick up the curse recorded in Dt.25.19. *Utterly destroy* means "put under the ban" or "destroy in the name of religion" (Dt.20.16-18). Both the Israelites and their neighbors attempted at times this type of holy war, but usually without complete success. The *Amalekites* are still numerous and troublesome to David in

that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.⁷”

4 So Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Tela'im, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah.⁵ And Saul came to the city of Am'alek, and lay in wait in the valley.⁶ And Saul said to the Ken'ites, “Go, depart, go down from among the Amal'ekites, lest I destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Ken'ites departed from among the Amal'ekites.⁷ And Saul defeated the Amal'ekites, from Hav'ilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.⁸ And he took Agag the king of the Amal'ekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; all that was despised and worthless they utterly destroyed.

10 The word of the LORD came to Samuel:¹¹ “I repent that I have made Saul king; for he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments.” And Samuel was angry; and he cried to the LORD all night.¹² And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal.”¹³ And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the LORD; I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”¹⁴ And Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”¹⁵ Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amal'ekites;

for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”¹⁶ Then Samuel said to Saul, “Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night.” And he said to him, “Say on.”

17 And Samuel said, “Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel.¹⁸ And the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go, utterly destroy the sinners, the Amal'ekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’¹⁹ Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop on the spoil, and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?”²⁰ And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, I have brought Agag the king of Am'alek, and I have utterly destroyed the Amal'ekites.²¹ But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.”²² And Samuel said,

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.”

24 And Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and

ch. 30. 4: Exaggerated numbers are characteristic of many ancient documents. 5-7: The Kenites were a clan partly with the Midianites and partly with the Amalekites. Moses' father-in-law seems to have belonged to this group (Jg.1.16; 4.11). The tradition of *kindness* referred to here appears in Num.10.29-32. 22: To obey is better than sacrifice; compare Hos.6.6. 23: On the

obeyed their voice.²⁵ Now therefore, I pray, pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.”

²⁶ And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.” ²⁷ As Samuel turned to go away, Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸ And Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.” ²⁹ And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent.” ³⁰ Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God.” ³¹ So Samuel turned back after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

³² Then Samuel said, “Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” ³³ And Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gib'e-ah of Saul. ³⁵ And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

16 The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with

oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”

² And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” ³ And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me him whom I name to you.” ⁴ Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?” ⁵ And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eli'ab and thought, “Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.” ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

⁸ Then Jesse called Abin'adab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” ⁹ Then Jesse made Sham-mah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” ¹⁰ And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” ¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he

sin of divination see Dt.18.9-14. **28:** The *neighbor* is David. **35:** There is a slight discrepancy between this verse and 19.24, though both are sometimes assigned to the Late Source.

16.1-13: Sequel to ch. 15—the anointing of David. This continuation of the Late Source may be a counterpart to the anointing of Saul (see 10.1 n.). The phrase *in the midst of his brothers* (v. 13) seems to be inconsistent with the attitude of the brothers in the next chapter (see 17.28), which is also usually assigned to the Late Source. It must be remembered, however, that not all modern writings are perfectly consistent with themselves. The Late Source is probably the product of a number of writers, all of whom had the same general point of view without attempting to be consistent in every detail. **5:** Consecration perhaps involved the ceremony of ritual

comes here.”¹² And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.”¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.¹⁵ And Saul's servants said to him, “Behold now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you.”¹⁶ Let our lord now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is skilful in playing the lyre; and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.”¹⁷ So Saul said to his servants, “Provide for me a man who can play well, and bring him to me.”¹⁸ One of the young men answered, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skilful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence; and the LORD is with him.”¹⁹ Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, “Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.”²⁰ And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a skin of wine and a kid, and sent them by David his son to Saul.²¹ And David came to Saul, and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his

armor-bearer.²² And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight.”²³ And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

17 Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Aze'kah, in E'phesdam'mim.² And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines.³ And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.⁴ And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.⁵ He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.⁶ And he had greaves of bronze upon his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders.⁷ And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him.⁸ He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you

washing. 12: The word *ruddy* (compare 17.42) is sometimes taken to mean that David was red-haired, but the reference is to his complexion (compare S. of S.5.10,11).

16.14-23: David wins a position at the court of Saul. This is a story from the Early Source of how Saul became acquainted with David. It also marks the beginning of the story of Saul's sufferings from mental illness, attributed in ancient times to an evil spirit (v. 14; compare Lk. 11.24-26). 21-22: Note the good relations between Saul and David.

17.1-58: David kills Goliath. A problem arises because according to vv. 55-58 Saul does not know David (16.21-23). Some would put the whole chapter in the Late Source. Others point to 21.9 (Early Source) and attribute all of ch. 17 to the Early Source. Both sources may have had the story and parts of both may have been combined here. According to this solution, the Early Source, continuing 16.14-23, is found in 17.1-11,32-40,42-48a,49,51-54; the Late Source, continuing 16.1-13, is seen in 17.12-31,41,48b,50,55-58, continued by 18.1-5. 4: According to 2 Sam.21.19, Goliath of Gath was slain at a later time by Elhanan, one of David's warriors. It may be supposed that this name became erroneously attached to David's victim, whose name was unknown (1 Chr.20.5). Six cubits and a span, about ten feet. 5: Five thousand

not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." ¹⁰ And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." ¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

¹² Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years.^x ¹³ The three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle; and the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eli'ab the first-born, and next to him Abin'adab, and the third Sham-mah. ¹⁴ David was the youngest; the three eldest followed Saul, ¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. ¹⁶ For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

¹⁷ And Jesse said to David his son, "Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; ¹⁸ also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See how your brothers fare, and bring some token from them."

¹⁹ Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. ²⁰ And David rose early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took the provisions, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the encampment as the host was going forth to the battle line, shouting the war cry. ²¹ And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against

army. ²² And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the ranks, and went and greeted his brothers. ²³ As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him.

²⁴ All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were much afraid. ²⁵ And the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and the man who kills him, the king will enrich with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." ²⁶ And David said to the men who stood by him, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" ²⁷ And the people answered him in the same way, "So shall it be done to the man who kills him."

²⁸ Now Eli'ab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eli'ab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption, and the evil of your heart; for you have come down to see the battle." ²⁹ And David said, "What have I done now? Was it not but a word?" ³⁰ And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way; and the people answered him again as before.

³¹ When the words which David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him. ³² And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philis-

^x Gk Syr: Heb among men

shekels, about one hundred and fifty lbs. **7:** *Six hundred shekels*, about nineteen lbs. **12:** The abrupt break in the narrative at this point probably marks insertion of material from the Late Source. **32-40:** These verses naturally continue v. 11. Saul knows David well, in conformity

tine.”³³ And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.”³⁴ But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock,³⁵ I went after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth; and if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and killed him.”³⁶ Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.”³⁷ And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”³⁸ Then Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a helmet of bronze on his head, and clothed him with a coat of mail.³⁹ And David girded his sword over his armor, and he tried in vain to go, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these; for I am not used to them.” And David put them off.⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in his shepherd’s bag or wallet; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him.⁴² And when the Philistine looked, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, ruddy and comely in appearance.⁴³ And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.⁴⁴ The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.”

⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine,

“You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’s and he will give you into our hand.”

48 When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.⁴⁹ And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; there was no sword in the hand of David.⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.⁵² And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath^y and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Sha-ara’im as far as Gath and Ekron.⁵³ And the Israelites came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp.⁵⁴ And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent.

55 When Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said to Abner,

^y Gk: Heb *Gai*

with 16.14–23. **55–58:** Note how completely unknown David is to Saul, in contrast to vv. 32–40, but in entire consistency with 16.1–13.

the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I cannot tell." ⁵⁶ And the king said, "Inquire whose son the stripling is."

⁵⁷ And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. ⁵⁸ And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

18 When he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ² And Saul took him that day, and would not let him return to his father's house. ³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his girdle. ⁵ And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him; so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

⁶ As they were coming home, when David returned from slaying the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with timbrels, with songs of joy, and with instruments^z of music. ⁷ And the women sang to one another as they made merry,

"Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his ten thousands."

⁸ And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him; he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thou-

sands; and what more can he have but the kingdom?" ⁹ And Saul eyed David from that day on.

¹⁰ And on the morrow an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand; ¹¹ and Saul cast the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice.

¹² Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. ¹³ So Saul removed him from his presence, and made him a commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. ¹⁴ And David had success in all his undertakings; for the LORD was with him. ¹⁵ And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in awe of him. ¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them.

¹⁷ Then Saul said to David, "Here is my elder daughter Merab; I will give her to you for a wife; only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "Let not my hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him." ¹⁸ And David said to Saul, "Who am I, and who are my kinsfolk, my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" ¹⁹ But at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to A'driel the Meho'lathite for a wife.

²⁰ Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David; and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. ²¹ Saul thought, "Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him."

^z Or triangles, or three-stringed instruments

18.1-30: Saul becomes jealous of David. Sources: vv. 1-5, Late Source, a continuation of ch. 17; vv. 6-9, probably Early Source; vv. 10-11, Late Source or editorial anticipation of 19.8-10; vv. 12-16, could be Early Source, except for the words *Because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul*; vv. 17-19, probably Late Source; vv. 20-29, Early Source (omitting a second time in v. 21); v. 30, editorial. **1-3:** A deep friendship arose between David and Jonathan. **6-9:** Saul's first anger at David. **10-11:** This incident seems to come too soon here. **17-19:** This incident of *Merab* is lacking in some Greek texts. **25:** The *marriage present* is regarded by some as a gift to the bride's family, by others as a "price" paid for the bride.

Therefore Saul said to David a second time,^a "You shall now be my son-in-law." ²² And Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David in private and say, 'Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you; now then become the king's son-in-law.'"

²³ And Saul's servants spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, "Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man and of no repute?" ²⁴ And the servants of Saul told him, "Thus and so did David speak." ²⁵ Then Saul said, "Thus shall you say to David, 'The king desires no marriage present except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.'"

Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. ²⁶ And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, ²⁷ David arose and went, along with his men, and killed two hundred of the Philistines; and David brought their foreskins, which were given in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife. ²⁸ But when Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that all Israel^b loved him, ²⁹ Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually.

³⁰ Then the princes of the Philistines came out to battle, and as often as they came out David had more success than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was highly esteemed.

19 And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. ² And Jonathan told David, "Saul my father seeks to kill you; therefore take

heed to yourself in the morning, stay in a secret place and hide yourself; ³ and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you; and if I learn anything I will tell you." ⁴ And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David; because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have been of good service to you; ⁵ for he took his life in his hand and he slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great victory for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced; why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" ⁶ And Saul hearkened to the voice of Jonathan; Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." ⁷ And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

⁸ And there was war again; and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and made a great slaughter among them, so that they fled before him. ⁹ Then an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing the lyre. ¹⁰ And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear; but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled, and escaped.

¹¹ That night Saul^{*} sent messengers to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." ¹² So Michal let David down through the window; and he fled away and

^a Heb by two

^b Gk: Heb Michal, Saul's daughter

^{*} Gk Old Latin: Heb *escaped that night*. ¹¹ And Saul

Probably the custom combined both elements. **27:** Only one hundred *foreskins* were required (v. 25); this story is to show David's superior prowess.

19.1-10: Saul seeks David's life. Late Source. **6-7:** Jonathan succeeds in restraining his father temporarily. **8-10:** Compare 18.10-11. The incident is in place here.

19.11-17: David forced to flee. Early Source. This incident follows naturally upon the marriage in 18.20-29. David seems to be unaware of the danger (compare the preceding vv. in the

escaped. ¹³ Michal took an image^c and laid it on the bed and put a pillow^d of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with the clothes. ¹⁴ And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." ¹⁵ Then Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." ¹⁶ And when the messengers came in, behold, the image^c was in the bed, with the pillow^d of goats' hair at its head. ¹⁷ Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me thus, and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go; why should I kill you?'"

¹⁸ Now David fled and escaped, and he came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt at Nai'oth. ¹⁹ And it was told Saul, "Behold, David is at Nai'oth in Ramah." ²⁰ Then Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. ²¹ When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. ²² Then he himself went to Ramah, and came to the great well that is in Secu; and he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "Behold, they are at Nai'oth in Ramah." ²³ And he went from^f there to Nai'oth in Ramah; and

the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went he prophesied, until he came to Nai'oth in Ramah. ²⁴ And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel, and lay naked all that day and all that night. Hence it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

20 Then David fled from Nai'oth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" ² And he said to him, "Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me; and why should my father hide this from me? It is not so." ³ But David replied,^g "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes; and he thinks, 'Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death." ⁴ Then said Jonathan to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." ⁵ David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king; but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. ⁶ If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city; for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' ⁷ If he says, 'Good!' it will be well with your servant; but if he is

^c Heb *teraphim*

^d The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^f Gk: Heb lacks *from* ^g Gk: Heb *swore again*

Late Source) until Michal tells him. **13:** *Image*, see Gen.31.19 n.; Jg.17.5. The nature of the *image* and *pillow* here is obscure.

19.18-24: *Saul's ecstatic behavior.* Probably an independent story belonging to neither of our sources. The Early Source has its own version of this matter (10.10-12), and the Late Source says that Samuel never saw Saul again (15.35). The nature of this *prophesying* (v. 20) as ecstatic dancing or whirling must be kept in mind (see 10.6 n.). The names *Secu* and *Nai'oth in Ramah* (v. 22) seem to indicate locations within the town of Ramah.

20.1-42: *An independent tradition of the break between Saul and David*, incompatible with all three sections of ch. 19. David is represented as still a member of the king's household and Jonathan seems unaware of Saul's hatred of David. The break between Saul and David was so significant that many different stories about it were told. **1:** The first part of this verse is an editorial attempt to join it to ch. 19. Actually, according to what follows, David had not yet left the court of Saul. **5:** *The new moon* was a festival day, when all members of the household

angry, then know that evil is determined by him.⁸ Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a sacred covenant^h with you. But if there is guilt in me, slay me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father?"⁹ And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that evil should come upon you, would I not tell you?"¹⁰ Then said David to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?"¹¹ And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field.

12 And Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness!ⁱ When I have sounded my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you?"¹³ But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, if I do not disclose it to you, and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father.¹⁴ If I am still alive, show me the loyal love of the LORD, that I may not die;^j and do not cut off your loyalty from my house for ever. When the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth,¹⁵ let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David.^k And may the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies."¹⁷ And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty.¹⁹ And on the third day you will be greatly missed;^l then go to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain be-

side yonder stone heap."²⁰ And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark.²¹ And behold, I will send the lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,' then you are to come, for, as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger.²² But if I say to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then go; for the LORD has sent you away.²³ And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me for ever."

24 So David hid himself in the field; and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food.²⁵ The king sat upon his seat, as at other times, upon the seat by the wall; Jonathan sat opposite,ⁿ and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

26 Yet Saul did not say anything that day; for he thought, "Something has befallen him; he is not clean, surely he is not clean."²⁷ But on the second day, the morrow after the new moon, David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"²⁸ Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem;²⁹ he said, 'Let me go; for our family holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away, and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have

h Heb a covenant of the LORD

i Heb lacks be witness *j* Heb uncertain

k Gk: Heb earth, and Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David *l* Gk: Heb go down quickly

m Gk: Heb the stone Ezel

n Cn See Gk: Heb stood up

were supposed to eat together. **8:** *Sacred covenant* is a reference to the deep friendship of David and Jonathan. **17:** *His own soul*, meaning "his own life" or "himself." **26:** Some mishap could have caused temporary ritual uncleanness. **30:** A popular form of cursing was then, and is now, to berate a person's mother; hence the words *your mother's nakedness*, as though she

chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? ³¹ For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and fetch him to me, for he shall surely die."

³² Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" ³³ But Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; so Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. ³⁴ And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

³⁵ In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little lad. ³⁶ And he said to his lad, "Run and find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. ³⁷ And when the lad came to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" ³⁸ And Jonathan called after the lad, "Hurry, make haste, stay not." So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. ³⁹ But the lad knew nothing; only Jonathan and David knew the matter. ⁴⁰ And Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go and carry them to the city." ⁴¹ And as soon as the lad had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap^o and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times; and they kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David recovered himself.^p ⁴² Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the

name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, for ever.'" And he rose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.^q

21 Then came David to Nob to Ahim'elech the priest; and Ahim'elech came to meet David trembling, and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?" ² And David said to Ahim'elech the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter, and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. ³ Now then, what have you at hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." ⁴ And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread at hand, but there is holy bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." ⁵ And David answered the priest, "Of a truth women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition; the vessels of the young men are holy, even when it is a common journey; how much more today will their vessels be holy?" ⁶ So the priest gave him the holy bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.

⁷ Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; his name was Do'eg the E'domite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen.

⁸ And David said to Ahim'elech,

^o Gk: Heb from beside the south ^p Or exceeded
^q This sentence is 21.1 in Heb ^r Ch 21.2 in Heb

were a prostitute or something of that sort. **33:** Compare the similar treatment of David, 18.11 and 19.10.

21.1-9: David escapes to Nob. Early Source. This incident follows directly upon 19.11-17, David's flight with the help of Michal. Note that he is *alone* (v. 1), that he avoids telling the real reason for his coming in that fashion, and claims to have a retinue (*the young men*) nearby (v. 2). **6:** On the *holy bread* or the *bread of the Presence* in later tradition, see Lev.24.5-9; on the use of this passage in the New Testament, see Mk.2.23-28. **7:** *Doeg* appears later as David's betrayer (22.9). He was *detained* to perform some sort of religious ceremony. **8:** David was not

"And have you not here a spear or a sword at hand? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste." ⁹ And the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you will take that, take it, for there is none but that here." And David said, "There is none like that; give it to me."

10 And David rose and fled that day from Saul, and went to A'chish the king of Gath. ¹¹ And the servants of A'chish said to him, "Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another of him in dances,

'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'"

¹² And David took these words to heart, and was much afraid of A'chish the king of Gath. ¹³ So he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and made marks on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle run down his beard.

¹⁴ Then said A'chish to his servants, "Lo, you see the man is mad; why then have you brought him to me? ¹⁵ Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

22 David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. ² And every one who was in distress, and every one who was in debt, and every one who was discontented, gathered to him; and he became captain over them. And there

were with him about four hundred men.

3 And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Pray let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God will do for me." ⁴ And he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. ⁵ Then the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not remain in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed, and went into the for-est of Hereth.

6 Now Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. Saul was sitting at Gib'e-ah, under the tamarisk tree on the height, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.

⁷ And Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you Benjaminites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, ⁸ that all of you have conspired against me? No one discloses to me when my son makes a league with the son of Jesse, none of you is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day." ⁹ Then answered Do'eg the E'domite, who stood by the servants of Saul, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahim'elech the son of Ahi'tub, ¹⁰ and he inquired of the LORD for him, and gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

11 Then the king sent to summon

s Syr Vg: Heb come out

only alone, but unarmed, a fact testifying to the hastiness of his flight (contrast the story of more leisurely departure in ch. 20). **9:** *The ephod* is here a box, not a linen apron (see 14.3 n.).

21.10-15: David flees to Gath. Late Source. The Early Source's version of this episode is found in ch. 27. **11:** The purpose of this version of the story may have been to show that David and Achish had nothing to do with one another, in contrast to ch. 27, where they get along very well.

22.1-23: David at Adullam; massacre of the priests of Nob. Early Source. **1:** *Adullam* was a place southwest of Bethlehem, in David's home territory, so to speak. **2:** David collects a retinue of malcontents from his native Judah. **3-5:** The locations of *Mizpeh of Moab* and *Hereth* are unknown. On the prophet Gad see 2 Sam.24.12. **9:** *Doeg the Edomite*, a foreigner who

Ahim'elech the priest, the son of Ahi'tub, and all his father's house, the priests who were at Nob; and all of them came to the king. ¹² And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahi'tub." And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." ¹³ And Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?" ¹⁴ Then Ahim'elech answered the king, "And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard, and honored in your house?" ¹⁵ Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him? No! Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father; for your servant has known nothing of all this, much or little." ¹⁶ And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahim'elech, you and all your father's house." ¹⁷ And the king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it to me." But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. ¹⁸ Then the king said to Do'eg, "You turn and fall upon the priests." And Do'eg the E'domite turned and fell upon the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod. ¹⁹ And Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both men and women,

children and sucklings, oxen, asses and sheep, he put to the sword.

²⁰ But one of the sons of Ahim'elech the son of Ahi'tub, named Abi'athar, escaped and fled after David. ²¹ And Abi'athar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. ²² And David said to Abi'athar, "I knew on that day, when Do'eg the E'domite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's house. ²³ Stay with me, fear not; for he that seeks my life seeks your life; with me you shall be in safekeeping."

23 Now they told David, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and are robbing the threshing floors." ² Therefore David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah." ³ But David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" ⁴ Then David inquired of the LORD again. And the LORD answered him, "Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will give the Philistines into your hand." ⁵ And David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and made a great slaughter among them. So David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah.

⁶ When Abi'athar the son of Ahim'elech fled to David to Keilah, he came down with an ephod in his hand. ⁷ Now

t Gk Tg: Heb and has turned aside to

had attached himself to Saul and held a good position under him (21.7). **17:** The soldiers of Saul refused to commit this atrocious deed against their fellow Israelites, and Saul did not have the authority to compel them. **18:** *Doeg*, the foreigner, with loyalty to Saul but none to the Israelites, willingly did the deed. *Linen ephod*, see 2.18 n. **19:** See 15.3 n. Compare Jos. ch. 7. **20-23:** *Abiathar* was to play a very important part in the subsequent history of David. Some have even supposed that he is the author of the Early Source, writing of himself objectively in the third person (see Introduction).

23.1-13: David's relief of Keilah. Early Source. **1:** *Keilah* was a few miles south of Adullam (22.1). **3:** From this verse it is clear that *Keilah* belonged neither to *Judah* nor to the *Philistines* at that time. **6:** This verse is probably an annotation originally made in the margin of the manuscript. It fits better just before v. 4. The *ephod* here is the box containing the sacred lots, as in 21.9 (see 14.3 n.); compare vv. 9-10.

it was told Saul that David had come to Kei'lah. And Saul said, "God has given him into my hand; for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars."⁸ And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Kei'lah, to besiege David and his men.⁹ David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him; and he said to Abi'athar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."¹⁰ Then said David, "O LORD, the God of Israel, thy servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Kei'lah, to destroy the city on my account.¹¹ Will the men of Kei'lah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as thy servant has heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant." And the LORD said, "He will come down."¹² Then said David, "Will the men of Kei'lah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will surrender you."¹³ Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Kei'lah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Kei'lah, he gave up the expedition.¹⁴ And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.

¹⁵ And David was afraid because Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the Wilderness of Ziph at Horesh.¹⁶ And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose, and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God.¹⁷ And he said to him, "Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you; you shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you; Saul my

father also knows this."¹⁸ And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD; David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

¹⁹ Then the Ziphites went up to Saul at Gib'e-ah, saying, "Does not David hide among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachi'lah, which is south of Jeshi'mon?"²⁰ Now come down, O king, according to all your heart's desire to come down; and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand."²¹ And Saul said, "May you be blessed by the LORD; for you have had compassion on me."²² Go, make yet more sure; know and see the place where his haunt is, and who has seen him there; for it is told me that he is very cunning.²³ See therefore, and take note of all the lurking places where he hides, and come back to me with sure information. Then I will go with you; and if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."²⁴ And they arose, and went to Ziph ahead of Saul.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Ma'on, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshi'mon.²⁵ And Saul and his men went to seek him. And David was told; therefore he went down to the rock which is^v in the wilderness of Ma'on. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Ma'on.²⁶ Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain; and David was making haste to get away from Saul, as Saul and his men were closing in upon David and his men to capture them,²⁷ when a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Make haste and come; for the Philis-

u Or saw that v Gk: Heb and dwelt

23.14-24.22: David spares Saul's life. Late Source. The Early Source's version of this incident is found in ch. 26. The present passage marks the conclusion of the Late Source, except for the death of Samuel, briefly noted in 25.1 and 28.3. **14:** Ziph was a rocky area south of Hebron. *Every day*, in this context means "all the time" or "constantly." **19:** The names *Hachilah* and *Jeshimon*, which mean "dark" and "desolate" respectively, suggest good places for hiding. **24:** *Maon* was a little south of Ziph, *Hachilah*, and *Jeshimon* (compare Jos.15.55). *Arabah* here simply means "desert," not the depression north and south of the Dead Sea. **27-29:** In the Early Source (ch. 26) there is no interruption by the *Philistines*, nor does the scene shift to

tines have made a raid upon the land." ²⁸ So Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines; therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape. ^{29w} And David went up from there, and dwelt in the strongholds of En-ge'di.

24 When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-ge'di." ² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. ³ And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. ⁴ And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" Then David arose and stealthily cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. ⁵ And afterward David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. ⁶ He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed." ⁷ So David persuaded his men with these words, and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave, and went upon his way.

⁸ Afterward David also arose, and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth, and did obeisance. ⁹ And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your hurt'?" ¹⁰ Lo, this day your eyes

have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave; and some bade me kill you, but I^x spared you. I said, 'I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed.' ¹¹ See, my father, see the skirt of your robe in my hand; for by the fact that I cut off the skirt of your robe, and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. ¹² May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me upon you; but my hand shall not be against you. ¹³ As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you. ¹⁴ After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! ¹⁵ May the LORD therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and you, and see to it, and plead my cause, and deliver me from your hand."

¹⁶ When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷ He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. ¹⁸ And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. ¹⁹ For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. ²¹ Swear to me therefore by the LORD

w Ch 24.1 in Heb x Gk Syr Tg: Heb you

En-gedi, on the west shore of the Dead Sea. **24.2:** *Wildgoats' Rocks* is most descriptive of the character of the terrain. **4b-5:** *Then David arose . . .*; this belongs after v. 7a, . . . to attack Saul. **14:** Dogs were held in low esteem in those days; a dead dog would be less than nothing (2 Sam.9.8; 16.9). **20-21:** The Late Source comes to a close with Saul practically in tears, handing the kingdom to David (compare what Jonathan says in 23.17). In the Early Source (26.22) nothing is said about David's becoming king, a question that did not arise until after the death of Saul.

that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house." ²² And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home; but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

25 Now Samuel died; and all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah.

Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. ² And there was a man in Ma'on, whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel. ³ Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was of good understanding and beautiful, but the man was churlish and ill-behaved; he was a Calebite. ⁴ David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. ⁵ So David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. ⁶ And thus you shall salute him: 'Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.' ⁷ I hear that you have shearers; now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing, all the time they were in Carmel. ⁸ Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes; for we come on a feast day. Pray, give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.'"

⁹ When David's young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name

of David; and then they waited. ¹⁰ And Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who are breaking away from their masters. ¹¹ Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men who come from I do not know where?" ¹² So David's young men turned away, and came back and told him all this. ¹³ And David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword!" And every man of them girded on his sword; David also girded on his sword; and about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.

¹⁴ But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed at them. ¹⁵ Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them; ¹⁶ they were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. ¹⁷ Now therefore know this and consider what you should do; for evil is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is so ill-natured that one cannot speak to him."

¹⁸ Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two skins of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched grain, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. ¹⁹ And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I come after you." But she did not tell

25.1a: The death of Samuel. The notation of an editor, or the conclusion of the Late Source; repeated in 28.3a. The brevity of the obituary is surprising.

25.1b-44: David, Nabal, and Abigail. Early Source. The story of how David obtained his second wife. **1b:** *The wilderness of Paran* is so far to the south that it could hardly have had any connection with the movements of David at this time; the Greek version reads "the wilderness of Maon," and some modern translations follow this reading. **2:** This *Carmel* lay between Ziph and Maon (see 23.14 n. and 24 n.); it must not be confused with the famous Mount Carmel to the north near the seacoast. **3:** The *Calebite* clan had not yet been absorbed by the tribes of Judah (Jos.15.13-19; Jg.1.12-15). **11:** *Water*, the Greek version reads "wine," no doubt correctly (compare vv. 18 and 36). **16:** David and his men were outlaws, but of the

her husband Nabal. ²⁰ And as she rode on the ass, and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her; and she met them. ²¹ Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good. ²² God do so to David" and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him."

²³ When Ab'igail saw David, she made haste, and alighted from the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said, "Upon me alone, my lord, be the guilt; pray let your handmaid speak in your ears, and hear the words of your handmaid. ²⁵ Let not my lord regard this ill-natured fellow, Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal^z is his name, and folly is with him; but I your handmaid did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. ²⁶ Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, seeing the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt, and from taking vengeance with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. ²⁷ And now let this present which your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. ²⁸ Pray forgive the trespass of your handmaid; for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD; and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. ²⁹ If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the LORD your God; and the lives of

your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. ³⁰ And when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you prince over Israel, ³¹ my lord shall have no cause of grief, or pangs of conscience, for having shed blood without cause or for my lord taking vengeance himself. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your handmaid."

³² And David said to Ab'igail, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! ³³ Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from avenging myself with my own hand! ³⁴ For as surely as the LORD the God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had made haste and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male." ³⁵ Then David received from her hand what she had brought him; and he said to her, "Go up in peace to your house; see, I have hearkened to your voice, and I have granted your petition."

³⁶ And Ab'igail came to Nabal; and, lo, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she told him nothing at all until the morning light. ³⁷ And in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. ³⁸ And about ten days later the LORD smote Nabal; and he died.

³⁹ When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD

^y Gk Compare Syr: Heb *the enemies of David*
^z That is *fool*

"Robin Hood" type, even acting as a police force at times (compare v. 21). **26:** The oath, *as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives*, may be translated more simply thus: "by the life of the LORD and by your own life." The word *soul* here has nothing to do with the life after death. **29:** *The bundle of the living* is the precious package of those for whom the LORD cares. **30:** The writer anticipates the future events in crediting Abigail with knowing that David was going to be king of Israel. **37:** Perhaps a stroke or a heart attack. **38:** In Biblical theology life and death

who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from evil; the LORD has returned the evil-doing of Nabal upon his own head." Then David sent and wooed Ab'igail, to make her his wife.⁴⁰ And when the servants of David came to Ab'igail at Carmel, they said to her, "David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife."⁴¹ And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground, and said, "Behold, your hand-maid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."⁴² And Ab'igail made haste and rose and mounted on an ass, and her five maidens attended her; she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

⁴³ David also took Ahin'o-am of Jezreel; and both of them became his wives. ⁴⁴ Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of La'ish, who was of Gallim.

26 Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gib'e-ah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachi'lah, which is on the east of Jeshi'mon?"² So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, with three thousand chosen men of Israel, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. ³ And Saul encamped on the hill of Hachi'lah, which is beside the road on the east of Jeshi'mon. But David remained in the wilderness; and when he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness, ⁴ David sent out spies, and learned of a certainty that Saul had come. ⁵ Then David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped;

and David saw the place where Saul lay, with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army; Saul was lying within the encampment, while the army was encamped around him.

⁶ Then David said to Ahim'elech the Hittite, and to Jo'ab's brother Abi'shai the son of Zeru'iah, "Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?" And Abi'shai said, "I will go down with you."⁷ So David and Abi'shai went to the army by night; and there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the army lay around him. ⁸ Then said Abi'shai to David, "God has given your enemy into your hand this day; now therefore let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice."⁹ But David said to Abi'shai, "Do not destroy him; for who can put forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?"¹⁰ And David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle and perish. ¹¹ The LORD forbid that I should put forth my hand against the LORD's anointed; but take now the spear that is at his head, and the jar of water, and let us go."¹² So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head; and they went away. No man saw it, or knew it, nor did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen upon them.

¹³ Then David went over to the other side, and stood afar off on the top of the mountain, with a great space

are in the hands of God. **41:** Note the formal obsequiousness of Abigail's words. **43-44:** David lost one wife and gained two more. By marrying Abigail, David consolidated his position with the powerful Calebite clan. *Ahinoam* was also a woman of the southern area; compare Jos.15.56 for the location of this *Jezreel* (not to be confused with the Plain of Esdraelon). These marriages were a great help to David politically.

26.1-25: David spares Saul's life. Early Source. See 23.14-24.22 for the Late Source's version of this incident. **5-6:** *Abner*, *Joab*, and *Abishai* were destined to play important parts in the history of David's reign in 2 Samuel. *Ahimelech the Hittite* is not to be confused with Ahimelech the priest in ch. 21. Hittites had settled in the country in earlier times (Gen.23.7; Jos.1.4), coming from the north. The few who remained in the time of David joined with the Israelites, adopting Hebrew names (as Uriah the Hittite, 2 Sam.11.3). **9:** *The LORD's anointed*, see 10.1 n. **13-16:** Even today the Arabs in the wilder parts of the country shout across great

between them; ¹⁴ and David called to the army, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Will you not answer, Abner?" Then Abner answered, "Who are you that calls to the king?" ¹⁵ And David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your lord." ¹⁶ This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jar of water that was at his head."

¹⁷ Saul recognized David's voice, and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." ¹⁸ And he said, "Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What guilt is on my hands?" ¹⁹ Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the LORD who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering; but if it is men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' ²⁰ Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the LORD; for the king of Israel has come out to seek my life,^a like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains."

²¹ Then Saul said, "I have done wrong; return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day; be-

hold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." ²² And David made answer, "Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and fetch it." ²³ The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD gave you into my hand today, and I would not put forth my hand against the LORD's anointed. ²⁴ Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the LORD, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation." ²⁵ Then Saul said to David, "Blessed be you, my son David! You will do many things and will succeed in them." So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

27 And David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines; then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand." ² So David arose and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to A'chish the son of Ma'och, king of Gath. ³ And David dwelt with A'chish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahin'o-am of Jezreel, and Ab'igail of Carmel, Nabal's widow. ⁴ And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he sought for him no more.

⁵ Then David said to A'chish, "If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be given me in one of the

a Gk: Heb a flea (as in 24.14)

distances in this manner. **17:** See 24.16. **21-24:** The meeting ends on a note of reconciliation, but, to judge from the opening words of the next chapter, David trusted Saul not at all.

27.1-28.2: David becomes a vassal of the Philistines. Early Source. If David really became loyal to the Philistines, then he was a traitor to his own people; if he was not loyal to the Philistines, then he was a deceiver—so the dilemma is posed. In 27.10-12 he seems to be deceiving the Philistines, yet in 29.8 he seems to affirm his loyalty to Achish. Actually, the situation developed in such a way that he did not have to make a public choice (ch. 29); of his real state of mind there is no record. Perhaps he himself was uncertain, and waited for God's guidance. From the standpoint of Biblical theology, it was God's will that he should return and become king of Judah first, and then of all Israel. **2:** David went to *Gath*, the very place from which Goliath was reputed to have come (17.4). **3:** Hope of better conditions for their wives and children was one of the reasons why David and his men took this step. **5-7:** These verses

country towns, that I may dwell there; for why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?" ⁶ So that day A'chish gave him Ziklag; therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. ⁷ And the number of the days that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

8 Now David and his men went up, and made raids upon the Gesh'urites, the Gir'zites, and the Amal'ekites; for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt. ⁹ And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the asses, the camels, and the garments, and came back to A'chish. ¹⁰ When A'chish asked, "Against whom^b have you made a raid today?" David would say, "Against the Negeb of Judah," or "Against the Negeb of the Jerah'-meelites," or, "Against the Negeb of the Ken'ites." ¹¹ And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, thinking, "Lest they should tell about us, and say, 'So David has done.'" Such was his custom all the while he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. ¹² And A'chish trusted David, thinking, "He has made himself utterly abhorred by his people Israel; therefore he shall be my servant always."

28 In those days the Philistines gathered their forces for war, to fight against Israel. And A'chish said to David, "Understand that you

and your men are to go out with me in the army." ² David said to A'chish, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do." And A'chish said to David, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

3 Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the wizards out of the land. ⁴ The Philistines assembled, and came and encamped at Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilbo'a. ⁵ When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. ⁶ And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. ⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at Endor."

8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments, and went, he and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Divine for me by a spirit, and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you." ⁹ The woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?" ¹⁰ But Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As the

b Gk Vg: Heb lacks whom

should come after v. 12. *Ziklag* was located somewhere near the border between the territory of the Philistines and Judah. **8-12:** David actually raided more distant and hostile peoples, such as the *Geshurites*, the *Girzites*, and the *Amalekites* (ch. 15), while pretending that he had attacked his own or friendly peoples, such as *Judah*, the *Jerahmeelites*, or the *Kenites* (30.26-31), who lived in the *Negeb* (southern Palestine). **28.1-2:** Achish is convinced of David's loyalty to the Philistines.

28.3-25: Saul consults the spirit of Samuel through the witch (medium) of Endor. Early Source. This passage interrupts the sequence between 28.2 and 29.1, and belongs after ch. 30, the scene being laid at Gilboa (v. 4) and nearby Endor (v. 7) on the night before the battle. **3:** The first part of the verse is a doublet of 25.1 and the second part is an anticipatory explanation of v. 9. **4:** The Philistines are now in Shunem opposite Gilboa; they had started at Aphek (29.1), and then moved to Jezreel (29.11) before reaching their present position. **6:** The ordinary means of finding God's will had failed Saul. On *Urim* ("and Thummim" understood) see 14.3 n. and 14.42. **9:** Necromancy (consultation of the dead) continued to be practiced from time to time (Is.8.19; 2 Kg.21.6) and was finally forbidden by written law (Dt.18.10-11; Lev.

LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.”¹¹ Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” He said, “Bring up Samuel for me.”¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul.”¹³ The king said to her, “Have no fear; what do you see?” And the woman said to Saul, “I see a god coming up out of the earth.”¹⁴ He said to her, “What is his appearance?” And she said, “An old man is coming up; and he is wrapped in a robe.” And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.

15 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul answered, “I am in great distress; for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do.”¹⁶ And Samuel said, “Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy?”¹⁷ The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me; for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbor, David.¹⁸ Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Am’alek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.¹⁹ Moreover the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of

the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me; the LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.”

20 Then Saul fell at once full length upon the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night.²¹ And the woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, “Behold, your handmaid has hearkened to you; I have taken my life in my hand, and have hearkened to what you have said to me.”²² Now therefore, you also hearken to your handmaid; let me set a morsel of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way.”²³ He refused, and said, “I will not eat.” But his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he hearkened to their words. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.²⁴ Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly killed it, and she took flour, and kneaded it and baked unleavened bread of it,²⁵ and she put it before Saul and his servants; and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

29 Now the Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek; and the Israelites were encamped by the fountain which is in Jezreel.² As the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing on in the rear with A’chish,³ the commanders

19.31; 20.6,27). Apparently it was already considered evil and a threat to true religion in Saul's time, and he had made an effort to stamp it out; but under pressure he himself relapsed into former practice. 12: *Samuel*, probably an error for “Saul.” 13: The word *god* here means a being from another world; that world was Sheol, the abode of the dead, conceived of as a great hollow place under the flat earth, hence the expression *coming up* (compare the word *up* in v. 11). 17–18: A later editor, in the spirit of the Late Source, has added the prediction of David's kingship and a reference to the Amalek incident (compare ch. 15). 20–25: Note the human kindness of the medium toward Saul.

29.1–11: The services of David rejected by the Philistine army. Early Source. This chapter continues 28.2. On David's attitude toward the Philistines, see 27.1–28.2 n. 1: *The Philistines gathered . . . at Aphek*, where they had captured the ark at the beginning of the war (4.1b). *The Israelites were at Jezreel*, a considerable distance away in the plain of Esdraelon (Esdraelon is the Greek form of Jezreel). 3: *Hebrews*, see 4.6 n. 6: According to the Hebrew text,

of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And A'chish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is not this David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years, and since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day." ⁴ But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him; and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him; he shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here?" ⁵ Is not this David, of whom they sing to one another in dances,

"Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his ten thousands?"

6 Then A'chish called David and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you have been honest, and to me it seems right that you should march out and in with me in the campaign; for I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless the lords do not approve of you." ⁷ So go back now; and go peaceably, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines." ⁸ And David said to A'chish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" ⁹ And A'chish made answer to David, "I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.'" ¹⁰ Now then rise early in the morning with the

servants of your lord who came with you; and start early in the morning, and depart as soon as you have light."

¹¹ So David set out with his men early in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. But the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

30 Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amal'ekites had made a raid upon the Negeb and upon Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag, and burned it with fire, ² and taken captive the women and all^c who were in it, both small and great; they killed no one, but carried them off, and went their way. ³ And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴ Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept, until they had no more strength to weep.

⁵ David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahin'o-am of Jezreel, and Ab'igail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ⁶ And David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

7 And David said to Abi'athar the priest, the son of Ahim'elech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abi'athar brought the ephod to David. ⁸ And David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue; for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue." ⁹ So David set out, and the six hundred men who were with him, and they came to the brook Besor, where those stayed who were left be-

^c Gk: Heb lacks *and all*

Achish shows his respect for David by swearing by David's God (compare *an angel of God* in v. 9). 11: *The Philistines* quickly marched on *Jezreel*, about seventy-five miles away, where the Israelites were encamped. The latter then moved up Mount Gilboa, where they fortified themselves in preparation for the battle; the Philistines took up positions at Shunem (28.4).

30.1-31: An interlude: the burning of Ziklag and David's pursuit of the Amalekites. Early Source. 1: *Ziklag* was about eighty miles south of Aphek, a long two-day march through rough terrain. 6: The men almost revolted, and David saved himself only by an appeal in the name of God. 7: *Abiathar*, see 22.20-23 n. *The ephod*, see 14.3 n. 9-10: *The brook Besor*, south of

hind. ¹⁰ But David went on with the pursuit, he and four hundred men; two hundred stayed behind, who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor.

¹¹ They found an Egyptian in the open country, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, they gave him water to drink, ¹² and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived; for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. ¹³ And David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago.

¹⁴ We had made a raid upon the Negeb of the Cher'ethites and upon that which belongs to Judah and upon the Negeb of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire." ¹⁵ And David said to him, "Will you take me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God, that you will not kill me, or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this band."

¹⁶ And when he had taken him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. ¹⁷ And David smote them from twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled. ¹⁸ David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives. ¹⁹ Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been

taken; David brought back all. ²⁰ David also captured all the flocks and herds; and the people drove those cattle before him,^d and said, "This is David's spoil."

²¹ Then David came to the two hundred men, who had been too exhausted to follow David, and who had been left at the brook Besor; and they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him; and when David drew near to the people he saluted them. ²² Then all the wicked and base fellows among the men who had gone with David said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil which we have recovered, except that each man may lead away his wife and children, and depart." ²³ But David said, "You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us; he has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us. ²⁴ Who would listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike." ²⁵ And from that day forward he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

²⁶ When David came to Ziklag, he sent part of the spoil to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD"; ²⁷ it was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, ²⁸ in Aro'er, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemo'a, ²⁹ in Racal, in the cities of the Jerah'meelites, in the cities of the Ken'ites, ³⁰ in Hormah, in Borash'an, in A'thach, ³¹ in Hebron, for all the places where David and his men had roamed.

d Cn: Heb they drove before those cattle

Ziklag. 14: See 27.8–12 n. Some interpret the word *Cherethites* as meaning "Cretans" and so equate them with the Philistines (see 4.1b–7.2 n.; compare Ezek.25.16; Zeph.2.5). **21–24:** David was not only fairminded, but politically wise at this point; he retained everybody's support. **25:** This verse is editorial; David was not yet king of Judah, to say nothing of Israel (compare Num.31.27). **26–31:** All these places, including *Bethel* (not the familiar one farther north), were in Judah. It is little wonder that David was soon made king of Judah (2 Sam.2.4). He could now work to that end, having been freed of his Philistine entanglement.

31 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilbo'a. ² And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan and Abin'adab and Mal'chishu'a, the sons of Saul. ³ The battle pressed hard upon Saul, and the archers found him; and he was badly wounded by the archers. ⁴ Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and make sport of me." But his armor-bearer would not; for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword, and fell upon it. ⁵ And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword, and died with him. ⁶ Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together. ⁷ And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those beyond the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his

sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

⁸ On the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilbo'a. ⁹ And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to their idols^e and to the people. ¹⁰ They put his armor in the temple of Ash'taro^h; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. ¹¹ But when the inhabitants of Ja'besh-gil'ead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹² all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan; and they came to Jabesh and burnt them there. ¹³ And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

^e Gk Compare 1 Chr 10.9: Heb *to the house of their idols*

31.1-13: The battle of Gilboa; death of Saul and his older sons. Early Source. This chapter follows the episode of Saul's séance with the medium (28.3-25). No details of the battle are given. Obviously the Israelites fortified themselves near the summit of the hill and the Philistines stormed their position successfully. **1-3:** The Israelites were totally defeated, three of Saul's sons were killed, and Saul was *badly wounded*. **4:** *These uncircumcised*, see 14.6 n. **5:** Biblical suicides are rare; compare 2 Sam.17.23; 1 Kg.16.18; Mt.27.5. **7:** The phrase *and those beyond the Jordan* seems to be in error (it is lacking in 1 Chr.10.7). There is no evidence that the Philistines occupied territory east of the Jordan. **10:** *Ashtaro^h*, see 7.3-4 n. The word here probably should be singular, "Astarte." Was this *temple* in *Beth-shan*, which the Philistines apparently had occupied, or back in Philistia? The story is told somewhat differently in 1 Chr.10.10. **11-13:** The men of *Jabesh-gilead* now had opportunity to show their gratitude for what Saul had done for them (ch. 11). With the burial in Jabesh, the story of Saul in the Early Source comes to an end, except for the later return of his bones to his native territory (2 Sam.21.12-14). According to this source, Saul came to a noble but tragic end, defending his people and land to the best of his ability. To the Late Source, however, he was utterly unworthy, entirely deserving of an unhappy fate. Note the similar conclusion of 1 Chr.10.13-14. Later writers, in order to glorify David, felt it necessary to depreciate Saul. David himself had no such attitude (compare the immediate sequel, 2 Sam. ch. 1).

SAMUEL

The Second Book of Samuel relates the rule of David, first as king of Judah alone (chs. 1–4) and then as king over Judah and Israel (chs. 5–24). Chapters 9–20 are concerned particularly with the domestic and political troubles of David's reign (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 10). Chapters 21–24 are something of an appendix, consisting of two hymns (ch. 22; 23.1–7) and the account of events which are chronologically out of place here (ch. 21; 23.8–39; ch. 24). The two books of Samuel were originally one book, and problems of sources and editing of both are discussed in the Introduction to 1 Samuel.

Since so much of 2 Samuel belongs to the Early Source, this classification will be assumed in the comments unless otherwise noted. Thanks to the genius of the author of the Early Source, 2 Samuel is one of the most clearly written, most homogenous, and most easily understood of all Biblical books; this is especially true of chs. 9–20, where the author seems to be writing from direct personal knowledge. Throughout the account of David's reign there shines the conviction that Israel is the people of the LORD and that his providence is at work in their history.

AFTER THE DEATH OF SAUL, WHEN David had returned from the slaughter of the Amal'ekites, David remained two days in Ziklag; ² and on the third day, behold, a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes rent and earth upon his head. And when he came to David, he fell to the ground and did obeisance. ³ David said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." ⁴ And David said to him, "How did it go? Tell me." And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, and many of the people also have fallen and are dead; and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead." ⁵ Then David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" ⁶ And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilbo'a; and there was Saul leaning upon his spear; and lo, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. ⁷ And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to

me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' ⁸ And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amal'ekite.' ⁹ And he said to me, 'Stand beside me and slay me; for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' ¹⁰ So I stood beside him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen; and I took the crown which was on his head and the armlet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

¹¹ Then David took hold of his clothes, and rent them; and so did all the men who were with him; ¹² and they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. ¹³ And David said to the young man who told him, "Where do you come from?" And he answered, "I am the son of a sojourner, an Amal'ekite." ¹⁴ David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?"

1.1–16: David learns of the death of Saul and Jonathan. Some deny that this passage can belong to the Early Source, because it contains a different version of Saul's death from that found in 1 Sam. ch. 31. It is more likely, however, that 1 Sam. ch. 31 tells the true story and that the young Amalekite was lying in the hope of gaining favor with David. **1:** This chapter takes up where 1 Sam. ch. 30 leaves off. **13:** *Sojourner*, Hebrew "gēr," a technical term for a foreigner residing in Israel over a long period, deserving protection but not entitled to full civil rights

¹⁵ Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go, fall upon him." And he smote him so that he died.

¹⁶ And David said to him, "Your blood be upon your head; for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have slain the LORD's anointed.'"

¹⁷ And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son, ¹⁸ and he said it^a should be taught to the people of Judah; behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar.^b He said:

¹⁹ "Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!

How are the mighty fallen!

²⁰ Tell it not in Gath,
publish it not in the streets of
Ash'kelon;
lest the daughters of the Philistines
rejoice,
lest the daughters of the
uncircumcised exult.

²¹ "Ye mountains of Gilbo'a,
let there be no dew or rain upon
you,
nor upsurging of the deep!^c
For there the shield of the mighty
was defiled,
the shield of Saul, not anointed
with oil.

²² "From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,

the bow of Jonathan turned not
back,
and the sword of Saul returned not
empty.

²³ "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and
lovely!

In life and in death they were not
divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

²⁴ "Ye daughters of Israel, weep over
Saul,
who clothed you daintily in scarlet,
who put ornaments of gold upon
your apparel.

²⁵ "How are the mighty fallen
in the midst of the battle!

"Jonathan lies slain upon thy high
places.

²⁶ I am distressed for you, my brother
Jonathan;
very pleasant have you been to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

²⁷ "How are the mighty fallen,
and the weapons of war per-
ished!"

Q After this David inquired of the
LORD, "Shall I go up into any of

^a Gk: Heb *the Bow* ^b Or *The upright*
^c Cn: Heb *fields of offerings*

(Ex.20.10; Dt.14.29). Perhaps "resident alien" is a better translation. **14-16:** Note David's continued respect for the memory of Saul and the office he held (1 Sam.26.9,11,16,24). David of course did not know that the Amalekite was lying.

1.17-27: David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan. David is known to have played the lyre (1 Sam.16.23) and is traditionally connected with the composition of psalms (see superscriptions to Pss. 3-6 and many others). The text has been damaged by transmission through the centuries, but the original feeling and flavor remain. Note the absence of any specifically religious reference. This is simply great lyric poetry. **18:** *The Book of Jashar* was apparently a collection of poems from various sources (see Jos.10.13 n.). **20.** *Gath* and *Ashkelon* were Philistine cities. *The uncircumcised*, see 1 Sam.14.6 n. **21:** The expression *upsurging of the deep*, paralleled in a Canaanite poem, recalls Gen.7.11. David invokes the curse of drought upon Gilboa. The words *not anointed with oil* may refer to the *shield*, meaning not in proper condition for use. If the reference is to Saul, then the word *not* has been inserted by an editor who refused to acknowledge Saul as the LORD's *anointed*. One of the signs of genuineness in this poem is David's expression of affection for Saul as well as Jonathan, in contrast with the attitude of the author of the Late Source in 1 Samuel.

2.1-11. David becomes king of Judah only. **1:** Probably David *inquired of the LORD* by means of the ephod and Urim and Thummim (see 1 Sam.14.3,41; 30.7-8). It should occasion no surprise that the tribe of *Judah* was able and willing to set up a separate kingdom. In the list of

the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." David said, "To which shall I go up?" And he said, "To Hebron." ² So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahin'-o-am of Jezreel, and Ab'igail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ³ And David brought up his men who were with him, every one with his household; and they dwelt in the towns of Hebron. ⁴ And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

When they told David, "It was the men of Ja'besh-gil'ead who buried Saul," ⁵ David sent messengers to the men of Ja'besh-gil'ead, and said to them, "May you be blessed by the LORD, because you showed this loyalty to Saul your lord, and buried him! ⁶ Now may the LORD show steadfast love and faithfulness to you! And I will do good to you because you have done this thing. ⁷ Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

8 Now Abner the son of Ner, com-

mander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-bo'sheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahana'im; ⁹ and he made him king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and E'phraim and Benjamin and all Israel. ¹⁰ Ish-bo'sheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. ¹¹ And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

¹² Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bo'sheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahana'im to Gibeon. ¹³ And Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah, and the servants of David, went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. ¹⁴ And Abner said to Jo'ab, "Let the young men arise and play before us." And Jo'ab said, "Let them arise." ¹⁵ Then they arose and passed over by number, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bo'sheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

the tribes of Israel in Jg.5.13-18 Judah is not mentioned; it was apparently leading a separate existence. For other indications of separateness, see 3.10; 5.5; 19.8-15,40-43; 20.1-2. *Judah* might never have joined the other tribes if the Philistine danger had not arisen. **4b-7:** David showed again his respect for the memory of Saul. When he dropped the political hint in v. 7, he probably did not know that Israel had a new king (vv. 8-9), or the new king had not yet been appointed. **8:** On the relation of *Abner* to Saul, see 1 Sam.14.50-51. The original form of the name *Ish-bosheth* ("man of shame") was *Ish-baal* or *Esh-baal* ("man of the Lord," 1 Chr.8.33; 9.39). This change was sometimes made by an editor because the element "baal" in the name suggested the detested Canaanite god Baal, the rival of the LORD. For this reason, such names were later abandoned altogether. *Mahanaim* was the principal town of Gilead; the Philistines were in control of the territory west of the Jordan. **9:** At the moment *Ish-bosheth* was king over *Gilead* only, but was theoretically king over *all Israel*. The other places mentioned probably sent representatives. The word *Ashurites* really means "Assyrians," a manifest impossibility; probably the correct form is "Asherites." **10-11:** As so frequently in ancient works, Biblical and non-Biblical, the figures seem doubtful. *Ish-bosheth* could not have been *forty years old*. Though he is mentioned in 1 Sam.14.49 (called "Ishvi" there), he did not fight at Gilboa; therefore he was probably a minor at this time. This circumstance would explain why he was so completely under the control of Abner. If he *reigned two years* only, then *David* could hardly have reigned more than *seven years* in *Hebron*. We gain the impression from 5.6 that *David* left *Hebron* soon after the death of *Ish-bosheth*. Probably the latter reigned more than *two years* and the former less than *seven years* in *Hebron*.

2.12-32: War with Israel breaks out. *Gibeon* (Jos. ch. 9) was an important town about five miles northwest of Jerusalem. Apparently both sides were planning to occupy the place when their fighting men met there. Something like a tournament, the exact nature of which is not clear, was agreed upon, but this soon degenerated into a real military engagement. *Joab* was David's nephew; both Saul (v. 8) and David had appointed relatives to be their commanders-

¹⁶ And each caught his opponent by the head, and thrust his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Hel'kath-hazzu'rim,^d which is at Gibeon. ¹⁷ And the battle was very fierce that day; and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

¹⁸ And the three sons of Zeru'iah were there, Jo'ab, Abi'shai, and As'ahel. Now As'ahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle; ¹⁹ and As'ahel pursued Abner, and as he went he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. ²⁰ Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is it you, As'ahel?" And he answered, "It is I." ²¹ Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men, and take his spoil." But As'ahel would not turn aside from following him. ²² And Abner said again to As'ahel, "Turn aside from following me; why should I smite you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother Jo'ab?" ²³ But he refused to turn aside; therefore Abner smote him in the belly with the butt of his spear, so that the spear came out at his back; and he fell there, and died where he was. And all who came to the place where As'ahel had fallen and died, stood still.

²⁴ But Jo'ab and Abi'shai pursued Abner; and as the sun was going down they came to the hill of Ammah, which lies before Gi'ah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. ²⁵ And the Benjaminites gathered themselves together behind Abner, and became one band, and took their stand on the top of a hill. ²⁶ Then Abner called to

Jo'ab, "Shall the sword devour for ever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you bid your people turn from the pursuit of their brethren?" ²⁷ And Jo'ab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely the men would have given up the pursuit of their brethren in the morning." ²⁸ So Jo'ab blew the trumpet; and all the men stopped, and pursued Israel no more, nor did they fight any more.

²⁹ And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah; they crossed the Jordan, and marching the whole forenoon they came to Mahana'im. ³⁰ Jo'ab returned from the pursuit of Abner; and when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David's servants nineteen men besides As'ahel. ³¹ But the servants of David had slain of Benjamin three hundred and sixty of Abner's men. ³² And they took up As'ahel, and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was at Bethlehem. And Jo'ab and his men marched all night, and the day broke upon them at Hebron.

3 There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.

² And sons were born to David at Hebron: his first-born was Amnon, of Ahin'o-am of Jezreel; ³ and his second, Chil'e-ab, of Ab'igail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; and the third, Ab'salom the son of Ma'acah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; ⁴ and the fourth, Adoni'jah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephati'ah

d That is the field of sword-edges

in-chief. **18:** *Zeruiah* was a sister or half sister of David (1 Chr.2.13-16). Joab and Abishai (1 Sam.26.6-9) play important parts in the history that follows. **22-23:** The killing of *Asahel* by *Abner* brought about a blood feud between *Joab* and *Abner*. **24-28:** Both commanders realized that they had gone too far and a truce was called. **29:** *The Arabah* ("the desert") here means the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea. The term is also used of the dry depression south of the Dead Sea. **30-32:** The initial victory of David's forces was symptomatic of what was to come (see 3.1).

3.1-39: Continuation of the war with Israel. **2-5:** These valuable verses were inserted by an editor interested in family statistics. **6-11:** *Abner quarrels with Ish-bosheth*. According to the

the son of Abi'tal; ⁵ and the sixth, Ith're-am, of Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

6 While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul. ⁷ Now Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Ai'ah; and Ish-bo'sheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?" ⁸ Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bo'sheth, and said, "Am I a dog's head of Judah? This day I keep showing loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David; and yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman. ⁹ God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the LORD has sworn to him, ¹⁰ to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beer-sheba." ¹¹ And Ish-bo'sheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

12 And Abner sent messengers to David at Hebron,^e saying, "To whom does the land belong? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring over all Israel to you." ¹³ And he said, "Good; I will make a covenant with you; but one thing I require of you; that is, you shall not see my face, unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." ¹⁴ Then David sent messengers to Ish-bo'sheth Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed at the price

of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." ¹⁵ And Ish-bo'sheth sent, and took her from her husband Pal'ti-el the son of La'ish. ¹⁶ But her husband went with her, weeping after her all the way to Bahu'rim. Then Abner said to him, "Go, return"; and he returned.

17 And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, "For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you. ¹⁸ Now then bring it about; for the LORD has promised David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies.'" ¹⁹ Abner also spoke to Benjamin; and then Abner went to tell David at Hebron all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do.

20 When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. ²¹ And Abner said to David, "I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires." So David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22 Just then the servants of David arrived with Jo'ab from a raid, bringing much spoil with them. But Abner was not with David at Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. ²³ When Jo'ab and all the army that was with him came, it was told Jo'ab, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has let him go, and he has gone in peace." ²⁴ Then

^e Gk: Heb where he was

usage of that day, a king's *concubines* were royal property that must be kept within the royal household. To aspire to have such a *concubine* (v. 7) was to aspire to the kingship, and that was treason (16.21-22; 1 Kg.2.22). The *dog*, being regarded as an unclean animal, served as a term of reproach; "a dead dog" or a *dog's head* (v. 8) were common expressions (9.8; 16.9; 1 Sam.17.43; 24.14). Evidently Abner realized that references to *Judah* and to *David* (vv. 8,9,10) would frighten *Ish-bosheth* into submission. **12-21: Abner negotiates with David.** David's demand for the return of Michal (1 Sam.18.20-27) was not due to any lack of wives, but had the political purpose of strengthening David's claim to Saul's throne as a son-in-law of the late king. **19:** It was particularly necessary to obtain the consent of Benjamin, Saul's own tribe, which was most likely to object. **22-39: The murder of Abner by Joab.** *Joab* had two motives for this murder: (a) to avenge the death of *Asahel* (2.22-23); (b) to eliminate a rival for

Jo'ab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you; why is it that you have sent him away, so that he is gone?" ²⁵ You know that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you, and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

²⁶ When Jo'ab came out from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah; but David did not know about it. ²⁷ And when Abner returned to Hebron, Jo'ab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he smote him in the belly, so that he died, for the blood of As'ahel his brother. ²⁸ Afterward, when David heard of it, he said, "I and my kingdom are for ever guiltless before the LORD for the blood of Abner the son of Ner. ²⁹ May it fall upon the head of Jo'ab, and upon all his father's house; and may the house of Jo'ab never be without one who has a discharge, or who is leprous, or who holds a spindle, or who is slain by the sword, or who lacks bread!" ³⁰ So Jo'ab and Abi'shai his brother slew Abner, because he had killed their brother As'ahel in the battle at Gibeon.

³¹ Then David said to Jo'ab and to all the people who were with him, "Rend your clothes, and gird on sackcloth, and mourn before Abner." And King David followed the bier. ³² They buried Abner at Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the peo-

ple wept. ³³ And the king lamented for Abner, saying,

"Should Abner die as a fool dies?"

³⁴ Your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered; as one falls before the wicked you have fallen."

And all the people wept again over him.

³⁵ Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was yet day; but David swore, saying, "God do so to me and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!" ³⁶ And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as everything that the king did pleased all the people. ³⁷ So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to slay Abner the son of Ner. ³⁸ And the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? ³⁹ And I am this day weak, though anointed king; these men the sons of Zeru'iah are too hard for me. The LORD require the evildoer according to his wickedness!"

4 When Ish-bo'sheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed. ² Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of raiding bands; the name of the one was Ba'anah, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon a man of Benjamin from Be-er'oth (for Be-er'oth also is reckoned to Benjamin; ³ the Be-er'othites fled to Gitta'im, and have been sojourners there to this day).

⁴ Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a

the post of commander-in-chief of David's army (19.13; 20.9-10). **28-39:** Joab was too powerful (v. 39) for David to order him executed, as had been done in the case of the Amalekite (1.15). Yet this murder greatly endangered David's position among the northern tribes. Therefore David did the best he could to make amends by invoking a series of curses upon Joab and his descendents (the *spindle* was a sign of effeminacy), by proclaiming public mourning throughout Judah, by himself taking the position of chief mourner at Abner's funeral and fasting all that day, then continuing to praise Abner thereafter. The people of Israel were convinced of David's innocence (v. 37) of the murder, though naturally any idea of making David king of Israel was put aside for the time.

4.1-12: The murder of Ish-bosheth and David's punishment of the murderers. **2-3:** Beeroth was originally a city under Gibeonite control (Jos.9.17); but the Gibeonite Beerothites had fled to Gittaim, probably during Saul's persecution (21.1-2,5), thus making it possible for Rimmon and other Israelites to settle in Beeroth. **4:** This verse is out of place here; it belongs in

son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up, and fled; and, as she fled in her haste, he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephib'osheth.

5 Now the sons of Rimmon the Be-er'othite, Rechab and Ba'anah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ish-bo'sheth, as he was taking his noonday rest. ⁶ And behold, the doorkeeper of the house had been cleaning wheat, but she grew drowsy and slept; so Rechab and Ba'anah his brother slipped in.^f ⁷ When they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bed-chamber, they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him. They took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all night, ⁸ and brought the head of Ish-bo'sheth to David at Hebron. And they said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-bo'sheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life; the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring." ⁹ But David answered Rechab and Ba'anah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Be-er'othite, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity, ¹⁰ when one told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and slew him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. ¹¹ How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous man

in his own house upon his bed, shall I not now require his blood at your hand, and destroy you from the earth?" ¹² And David commanded his young men, and they killed them, and cut off their hands and feet, and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bo'sheth, and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.

5 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh. ² In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you that led out and brought in Israel; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'" ³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. ⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. ⁵ At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jeb'usites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, "You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off"—thinking, "David cannot come in here." ⁷ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of

^f Gk: Heb ⁶And hither they came into the midst of the house fetching wheat; and they smote him in the belly; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped

or just before ch. 9. The original form of *Mephibosheth* ("he who spreads [?] shame") was Meribbaal ("he who strives for [?] the Lord," 1 Chr.8.34; 9.40). On reasons for the change, see 2.8 n. 8: By saying *the LORD has avenged my lord*, the guilty pair try to justify what they had done. 9-12: David continues to show respect for the family of Saul and to punish anyone seeking to harm members of that family (1.14-16; 3.28-39).

5.1-16: David becomes king of all Israel and Judah; he captures Jerusalem and makes it his capital. 1-2: These two sentences seem to be the work of an editor in the spirit of the Late Source of 1 Samuel (see Introduction to 1 Samuel). In the Early Source David was not a general in Saul's army, nor was he promised the kingship of Israel. 3: This sentence tells the unembellished story of what was done. 4-5: A chronological note by an editor which may be approximately correct, though David could hardly have been *thirty years old* at this time. *Forty years* is a favorite Biblical expression meaning a reasonably long time. *Israel and Judah* are kept clearly separate in the writer's mind. 6-9: The details of how David captured *Jerusalem or Zion*, the last town remaining to the Canaanites (locally called *Jebusites*) are not clear (compare

David. ⁸ And David said on that day, "Whoever would smite the Jeb'usites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul." Therefore it is said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house." ⁹ And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built the city round about from the Millo inward. ¹⁰ And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

¹¹ And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house. ¹² And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

¹³ And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David. ¹⁴ And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Sham'mu-a, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵ Ibhar, Eli'shu-a, Nepheg, Japhi'a, ¹⁶ Eli'shama, Eli'ada, and Eliph'elet.

¹⁷ When the Philistines heard that

David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up in search of David; but David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸ Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the valley of Reph'aim. ¹⁹ And David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Wilt thou give them into my hand?" And the LORD said to David, "Go up; for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand." ²⁰ And David came to Ba'al-pera'zim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through^g my enemies before me, like a bursting flood." Therefore the name of that place is called Ba'al-pera'zim.^h ²¹ And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.

²² And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread out in the valley of Reph'aim. ²³ And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, "You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come upon them opposite the balsam trees." ²⁴ And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then bestir yourself; for then the LORD has gone out before you to smite the army of the Philistines." ²⁵ And

^g Heb *paraz* ^h That is *Lord of breaking through*

1 Chr.11.4-9 for a somewhat different account). The capture was important because it removed the last vestige of Canaanite power in the land, and also provided a place where David could establish a neutral capital, belonging to neither Israel nor Judah, but lying between the two. Later tradition assumed an earlier possession of the city; contrast Jg.1.8 and 1 Sam.17.54 with Jg.19.10-12. *The Millo*, see 1 Kg.9.15 n. 11: Apparently the same *Hiram* who much later helped Solomon in the building of the temple (1 Kg.5.1-12). **13-16:** Sons of David. Editorial information similar to that in 3.2-5, though somewhat out of place, since *Solomon* at least was born later. Large harems were customary at that time (see Jg.8.30-31) and increased the prestige of the ruler. David, with at least twenty concubines and wives, was apparently never criticized on this score. It was quite otherwise with Solomon (1 Kg.11.1-4).

5.17-25: War with the Philistines. The Philistines now realized that David was steering a course that would make him an enemy, and one to be feared (1 Sam. chs. 27 and 29); and David no longer pretended to be their ally. His success as king would depend on his ability to deal with the Philistines. **17:** It is not clear which *stronghold* is meant; some think Jerusalem, others Adullam (1 Sam.22.1). **18:** *The valley of Rephaim* was probably located southwest of Jerusalem. **20:** In good oriental fashion, David made a pun on the place where his enemies were defeated (compare Gen.38.29). **21:** Formerly the Philistines had captured the sacred ark of the Israelites (1 Sam.4.11; 5.1); now the tables were turned, and the Philistines lost their idols. **22-25:** David defeated the Philistines again, pushing them back from *Geba*, near Jerusalem, to *Gezer*, near the border of their own territory. **24:** The rustling of the leaves in the tops of the balsam trees became the sound of marching, the signal to advance.

At this point 21.15-22 and 23.8-39 should be read; see the notes on these passages.

David did as the LORD commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.

6 David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. **2** And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Ba'ale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. **3** And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abin'adab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahi'o,ⁱ the sons of Abin'adab, were driving the new cart^j **4** with the ark of God; and Ahi'oⁱ went before the ark. **5** And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the LORD with all their might, with songs^k and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

6 And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. **7** And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there because he put forth his hand to the ark;^l and he died there beside the ark of God. **8** And David was angry because the LORD had broken forth upon Uzzah; and that place is called

Pe'rez-uz'zah,^m to this day. **9** And David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" **10** So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David; but David took it aside to the house of O'bed-e'dom the Gittite. **11** And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of O'bed-e'dom the Gittite three months; and the LORD blessed O'bed-e'dom and all his household.

12 And it was told King David, "The LORD has blessed the household of O'bed-e'dom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of O'bed-e'dom to the city of David with rejoicing; **13** and when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. **14** And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. **15** So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the horn.

16 As the ark of the LORD came

ⁱ Or and his brother

^j Compare Gk: Heb the new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill

^k Gk 1 Chr 13.8: Heb fir-trees

^l 1 Chr 13.10: Heb uncertain

^m That is The breaking forth upon Uzzah

6.1-15: The bringing of the ark to Jerusalem. David wished to add to the prestige of Jerusalem by making it a religious, as well as a political and military center. Hence it was particularly appropriate for him to bring there the ark, the sacred object of the northern tribes, and now the symbol of the national God. **2:** *Baale-judah* is either an error or another name for Kiriath-jearim, the place where the ark was left (1 Sam.6.21-7.2). *The LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim*, see 1 Sam.4.4 n. **5:** Some interpreters consider this verse a later embellishment, since the full orchestra seems more appropriate to the time after the temple had been built (compare 2 Chr.5.12-13; Ps.150.3-5). **6:** *Uzzah* was apparently trying to steady the ark as *the oxen stumbled*. **7:** At this point Uzzah died. Most ancient peoples attributed disaster to the anger of a deity. According to a later interpretation introduced here, Uzzah should not have touched the ark (see Num.4.15 n.). Even in these earlier times, the ark was regarded as very dangerous (1 Sam.5.11-12; 6.19). **8-9:** Was David *angry* or was he *afraid*? Probably the latter; v. 8 seems to be the work of a later editor, as is shown by the words *to this day*. **10-11:** *A Gittite* means a man from Gath, but *Obed-edom* was not necessarily from the Philistine town. Gath means "wine press," and there were several towns by that name in Israelite territory. On the other hand, this man could have been a follower of *David* from the latter's Philistine days (1 Sam.27.2-4). **12-15:** The prosperity and peace of the household of *Obed-edom* were taken as signs that God's anger in connection with the ark had ceased (v.12). Note that it was perfectly permissible for *David* to offer sacrifice (vv. 13,17; compare 1 Sam.13.10-13); only later was this function restricted to priests. On religious dancing, see Ex.15.20 n.; 32.19; 1 Kg.18.26. On the *linen ephod*, see 1 Sam.2.18 n.

into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. ¹⁷ And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. ¹⁸ And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts, ¹⁹ and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat,ⁿ and a cake of raisins. Then all the people departed, each to his house.

20 And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" ²¹ And David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD—and I will make merry before the LORD. ²² I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your^o eyes; but by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor." ²³ And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

7 Now when the king dwelt in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies round about, ² the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." ³ And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart; for the LORD is with you."

4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵ "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?' ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷ In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges^p of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" ⁸ Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel; ⁹ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and

ⁿ Vg: Heb uncertain ^o Gk: Heb my
^p 1 Chr 17.6: Heb tribes

6.16–23: Michal's alienation. *Michal* may have been resentful at being torn away from her husband Paltiel (3.15–16), or at the discovery that she was only one among many wives of David, or at the decline of her family's fortunes (vv. 16,20). **23:** It is not clear whether *Michal* . . . had no child because David put her away or because she was barren. Childlessness was considered a great misfortune; compare Gen.30.1; 1 Sam.1.6–11.

At this point 21.1–14 and ch. 24 should be read; see the notes on these passages.

7.1–29: David wishes to build a temple, but God wills that he establish an everlasting dynasty. This chapter is the only serious interruption of the Early Source in the entire book. Like 1 Sam. 2.27–36, it is a late theological commentary inserted into an early historical source, seeking to explain why David was not chosen to build the temple. It seems to have been based to some extent on Ps. 89 (compare Ps.132.11–12). Nathan the prophet (vv. 2,3,4,17) is used as a mouthpiece of the author, though the historical Nathan does not appear in the Early Source until 12.1. Verses 4–17 are often referred to as The Prophecy of Nathan and vv. 18–29 as The Prayer of David. In v. 6 the writer ignores the temple at Shiloh (1 Sam.1.7; 3.3).

violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; ¹⁵ but I will not take^q my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.' ¹⁷ In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

¹⁸ Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far? ¹⁹ And yet this was a small thing in thy eyes, O Lord God; thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast shown me future generations, O Lord God! ²⁰ And what more can David say to thee? For thou knowest thy servant, O Lord God! ²¹ Because of thy promise, and according to thy own heart, thou hast wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it. ²² Therefore thou art great, O LORD God; for

there is none like thee, and there is no God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. ²³ What other^s nation on earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name, and doing for them^t great and terrible things, by driving out^u before his people a nation and its Gods?^v ²⁴ And thou didst establish for thyself thy people Israel to be thy people for ever; and thou, O LORD, didst become their God. ²⁵ And now, O LORD God, confirm for ever the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house, and do as thou hast spoken; ²⁶ and thy name will be magnified for ever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of thy servant David will be established before thee. ²⁷ For thou, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, hast made this revelation to thy servant, saying, 'I will build you a house'; therefore thy servant has found courage to pray this prayer to thee. ²⁸ And now, O Lord God, thou art God, and thy words are true, and thou hast promised this good thing to thy servant; ²⁹ now therefore may it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken, and with thy blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."

8 After this David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and

^q Gk Syr Vg 1 Chr 17.13: Heb shall not depart

^r Cn: Heb this is the law for man

^s Gk: Heb one

^t Heb you

^u Gk 1 Chr 17.21: Heb for your land

^v Heb before thy people, whom thou didst redeem for thyself from Egypt, nations and its gods

The key to the understanding of this chapter is the play on the various meanings of the word *house*; in vv. 1-2 it means "palace"; in vv. 5,6,7,13 it means "temple"; in vv. 11,16,19,25,26,27,29 it means "dynasty"; in v. 18 it means "family status."

Historically the dynasty of David was not everlasting. It fell in 587 (586) B.C., probably some time before our author wrote. He may have been dreaming of a literal restoration of the kingdom of David, while at the same time vaguely anticipating the Kingdom of God, the only eternal kingdom.

8.1-18: Summary of David's wars and the administration of his kingdom. This chapter was contributed by a Deuteronomic editor (see Introduction to 1 Samuel). It has been conjectured that the book once ended with this summary, the more detailed and earlier material that

David took Meth'eg-am'mah out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he defeated Moab, and measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground; two lines he measured to be put to death, and one full line to be spared. And the Moabites became servants to David and brought tribute.

3 David also defeated Hadade'zer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to restore his power at the river Euphra'tes. 4 And David took from him a thousand and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers; and David hamstringed all the chariot horses, but left enough for a hundred chariots. 5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadade'zer king of Zobah, David slew twenty-two thousand men of the Syrians. 6 Then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus; and the Syrians became servants to David and brought tribute. And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went. 7 And David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadade'zer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 And from Betah and from Bero'thai, cities of Hadade'zer, King David took very much bronze.

9 When To'i king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army

of Hadade'zer, 10 To'i sent his son Joram to King David, to greet him, and to congratulate him because he had fought against Hadade'zer and defeated him; for Hadade'zer had often been at war with To'i. And Joram brought with him articles of silver, of gold, and of bronze; 11 these also King David dedicated to the LORD, together with the silver and gold which he dedicated from all the nations he subdued, 12 from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Am'alek, and from the spoil of Hadade'zer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David won a name for himself. When he returned, he slew eighteen thousand E'domites^w in the Valley of Salt. 14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the E'domites became David's servants. And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.

15 So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and equity to all his people. 16 And Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah was over the army; and Jehosh'aphat the son of Ahi'lud was recorder; 17 and Zadok the son of Ahi'tub and Ahim'elech the son of Abi'athar were priests; and Serai'ah

^w Gk: Heb returned from smiting eighteen thousand Syrians

follows having been suppressed for a time, though finally restored. The present chapter is not a mere digest of what follows, for it contains information not found elsewhere. 1: This seems intended as a statement of the final defeat of the Philistines; compare 21.15-22 and 23.8-39 for some details. *Meth'eg-ammah*, 1 Chr.18.1 reads "Gath and its villages." 2: The slaughter of two-thirds of the Moabites does not accord well with the friendly relations implied by 1 Sam.22.3-4. Perhaps something happened to revive the old enmity (1 Sam.14.47). 3-8: David defeats the Arameans (Syrians). This passage may be a partial summary of 10.6-19. *Zobah* (vv. 3,5) lay north of Damascus (vv. 5,6) and was attempting to extend its power to the *Euphrates* (v. 3). South of *Zobah*, Syria was controlled by *Damascus*. David defeated the coalition (v. 5), and thus controlled all of Syria. He kept enough horses for a hundred chariots only (v. 4). Solomon greatly expanded the use of horses and chariots (1 Kg.10.26-29). 9: *Hamath* lay north of *Zobah*. David did not control this territory, but its king was friendly. 13-14: David defeated Edom, and thus his little empire was enlarged to the south. In these campaigns the king did not always take to the field in person (11.1). *The Valley of Salt* is either the depression south of the Dead Sea, or a valley running southeast from Beer-sheba. 16-18: Another version of this list is found in 20.23-26. *Zadok* appears here (v. 17) historically for the first time (1 Sam. 2.35). His earlier history is not known, though later his ancestry is traced back to Aaron (1 Chr. 6.3-8). *Ahimelech the son of Abiathar* should perhaps be reversed (1 Sam.22.20), though it is also possible that *Abiathar* had a son *Ahimelech* who acted in place of his aged father (1 Chr. 18.16; 24.3,6,31). 18: *The Cherethites and Pelethites* were foreign mercenaries; probably the

was secretary;¹⁸ and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada was over^x the Cher'ethites and the Pel'ethites; and David's sons were priests.

9 And David said, "Is there still any one left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"² Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "Your servant is he."³ And the king said, "Is there not still some one of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet."⁴ The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Am'miel, at Lo-debar."⁵ Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Am'miel, at Lo-debar.⁶ And Mephib'osheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David, and fell on his face and did obeisance. And David said, "Mephib'osheth!" And he answered, "Behold, your servant."⁷ And David said to him, "Do not fear; for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jona-

than, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father; and you shall eat at my table always."⁸ And he did obeisance, and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?"

9 Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's son."¹⁰ And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him, and shall bring in the produce, that your master's son may have bread to eat; but Mephib'osheth your master's son shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do." So Mephib'osheth ate at David's^y table, like one of the king's sons.¹² And Mephib'osheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who dwelt in Ziba's house became Mephib'osheth's servants.¹³ So Mephib'osheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

^x Syr Tg Vg 20.23; 1 Chr 18.17: Heb lacks *was over*
^y Gk: Heb *my*

names are equivalent to "Cretans and Philistines" (15.18; 20.7,23; 1 Kg.1.38,44; see 1 Sam. 30.14 n.). It is entirely possible that some of *David's sons were priests*, for the restriction of the priesthood to a certain family had not yet arisen. The parallels, however, in 20.26 and 1 Chr. 18.17 have different readings.

9.1-20.26: The domestic and political troubles of David's reign. This section of the Early Source is, in view of its superb literary style and sober objectivity, the prose masterpiece of the Old Testament. The writer was obviously dealing with events of which he had personal knowledge and in which he may have participated. For the fullest appreciation the section should be read as a unit with its conclusion in 1 Kg. chs. 1-2.

9.1-13: David shows dutiful kindness to Mephibosheth. As preparation for this chapter, read 4.4 and 21.1-14 (omitting v. 7); see comments on these passages and on ch. 6 (end). **1:** The word translated *kindness* contains the idea of obligation, "kindness required by loyalty to a covenant." *David and Jonathan* had sworn eternal loyalty to one another (1 Sam.18.1-4; 20.14-17). *David* was probably also fearful of reaction to the execution of seven of Saul's descendants at the request of the Gibeonites (see 21.11-14 n.). The king also needed to know whether any member of the former royal family remained who might serve as a focal point of rebellion. **3:** *The kindness of God* is a stronger expression of the *kindness* of v. 1, meaning "obligation under God." **4:** *Machir of Lo-debar*, see 17.27. **6:** The proper form of *Mephibosheth* is Meribbaal (see 4.4 n.). **7:** Probably one reason for *fear* on the part of Mephibosheth was what had happened to two of his half brothers and five of his nephews (21.8-9). **8:** *Dead dog*, see 1 Sam.24.14 n. **13:** David must have been pained that Jonathan's son was such a pathetic cripple, and yet relieved that this scion of Saul could hardly be expected to head an insurrection. *Ziba* claimed later that Mephibosheth was disloyal (16.1-4), but the claim seems to have been false (19.24-30).

10 After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. ² And David said, "I will deal loyally with Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me." So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites. ³ But the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think, because David has sent comforters to you, that he is honoring your father? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?" ⁴ So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off half the beard of each, and cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sent them away. ⁵ When it was told David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."

⁶ When the Ammonites saw that they had become odious to David, the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-re'hob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand foot soldiers, and the king of Ma'acah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob, twelve thousand men. ⁷ And when David heard of it, he sent Jo'ab and all the host of the mighty men. ⁸ And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gate; and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Ma'acah, were by themselves in the open country.

⁹ When Jo'ab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the picked men of Israel, and arrayed them against

the Syrians; ¹⁰ the rest of his men he put in the charge of Abi'shai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. ¹¹ And he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you." ¹² Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what seems good to him." ¹³ So Jo'ab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians; and they fled before him. ¹⁴ And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abi'shai, and entered the city. Then Jo'ab returned from fighting against the Ammonites, and came to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. ¹⁶ And Hadade'zer sent, and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates;^z and they came to Helam, with Shobach the commander of the army of Hadade'zer at their head. ¹⁷ And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians arrayed themselves against David, and fought with him. ¹⁸ And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians the men of seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen, and wounded Shobach the commander of their army, so that he died there. ¹⁹ And when all the kings who were servants of Hadade'zer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel, and became subject to them.

^z Heb river

10.1-19: David defeats the Ammonites and Arameans (Syrians). **2:** There is no record of the covenant or agreement between *David* and *Nahash* (but compare 17.27). The relations between Saul and Nahash had been hostile (1 Sam. ch. 11). **3:** Perhaps Hanun's advisers were thinking of David's treatment of the Moabites (see 8.2 n.). **4:** Mutilation of the beard, the symbol of a man's honor, and forcible indecent exposure were the worst insults imaginable in those days. **6-19:** The summary of these engagements in 8.3-8 omits mention of the part the Ammonites played in calling the Arameans (*Syrians*) into the conflict. **16:** Here *beyond the Euphrates* means "west of the Euphrates," as in 1 Kg.4.24. David now takes to the field in person, in spite of the earlier warning in 21.17 (compare 12.28). **18:** On the numbers, see 1 Sam.4.10 n.

So the Syrians feared to help the Ammonites any more.

|| In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Jo'ab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

2 It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. ³ And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathshe'ba, the daughter of Eli'am, the wife of Uri'ah the Hittite?" ⁴ So David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.

⁵ And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, "I am with child."

6 So David sent word to Jo'ab, "Send me Uri'ah the Hittite." And Jo'ab sent Uri'ah to David. ⁷ When Uri'ah came to him, David asked how Jo'ab was doing, and how the people fared, and how the war prospered. ⁸ Then David said to Uri'ah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." And Uri'ah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. ⁹ But Uri'ah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ When they told

David, "Uri'ah did not go down to his house," David said to Uri'ah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"

¹¹ Uri'ah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths; and my lord Jo'ab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." ¹² Then David said to Uri'ah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart." So Uri'ah remained in Jerusalem that day, and the next. ¹³ And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Jo'ab, and sent it by the hand of Uri'ah. ¹⁵ In the letter he wrote, "Set Uri'ah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die." ¹⁶ And as Jo'ab was besieging the city, he assigned Uri'ah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. ¹⁷ And the men of the city came out and fought with Jo'ab; and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uri'ah the Hittite was slain also. ¹⁸ Then Jo'ab sent and told David all the news about the fighting; ¹⁹ and he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished

11.1-27: Second campaign against Ammon; David wrongs Uriah. At this point the author begins his intimate portrait of the domestic and political troubles of the royal family and the court, with all their sordidness and tragic consequences. The military history serves only as a framework in which to place the personal episodes in the private and public life of the king. The amazing realism of the account could only have been achieved by a person with first-hand knowledge. By such a writer the sin of David with Bathsheba could not be omitted (as in 1 Chr. 20.1-3) or glossed over (as in 1 Sam.13.14). The consequences are so much a part of the story which follows that the cause must be clearly exhibited. Compare the superscription to Ps. 51, added by an editor, who at least recognized the facts and the need for repentance and divine mercy in such a case. **1:** *His servants*, outstanding men of the royal bodyguard (23.8-39); *all Israel*, the army in general. **3:** *Uriah the Hittite*, see 1 Sam.26.6 n. **4:** See Lev.15.19-24 for the later codification of the law on the purification from *uncleanness*. The parenthesis probably was added by an editor who wished to indicate moral *uncleanness* by a physical symbol. **8:** The invitation *wash your feet* was standard custom after a journey (Gen.18.4; 19.2; 24.32). **9-13:** Continence was required of soldiers consecrated for war by religious sanction (1 Sam.21.4-5).

telling all the news about the fighting to the king, ²⁰ then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?' ²¹ Who killed Abim'elech the son of Jerub'besheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uri'ah the Hittite is dead also.' "

22 So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Jo'ab had sent him to tell. ²³ The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us, and came out against us in the field; but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. ²⁴ Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall; some of the king's servants are dead; and your servant Uri'ah the Hittite is dead also." ²⁵ David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Jo'ab, 'Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another; strengthen your attack upon the city, and overthrow it.' And encourage him."

26 When the wife of Uri'ah heard that Uri'ah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. ²⁷ And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

12 And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had very many flocks and herds; ³ but the poor man

had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his morsel, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴ Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared it for the man who had come to him." ⁵ Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; ⁶ and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

7 Nathan said to David, "You are the man. Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul; ⁸ and I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. ⁹ Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have smitten Uri'ah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uri'ah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹ Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor,

Uriah refused to violate this taboo even when David made him drunk. 21: The name *Jerub-besheth* was originally Jerubbaal (see 2.8 n. and Jg.7.1); *besheth* is another form of the Hebrew word for "shame." 27: Note the moral condemnation by the author in the name of God.

12.1-25: Rebuke of David by the prophet Nathan; David's repentance and the birth of Solomon. 1-6: Nathan's famous parable of the ewe lamb. The prophet showed courage, but not originality; what David had done was wrong, even according to the standards of that day. Later Nathan became an active supporter of Bathsheba (1 Kg.1.5-14). 8: There is no other hint that David took over Saul's wives, though such was the custom (16.21-22; 1 Kg.2.17-25). 11: The prediction of evil . . . out of your own house is very exact; it may have been added by an editor. The neighbor is presumably Absalom (16.21-22). 13-14: According to the idea of the lex

and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.¹² For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.”

¹³ David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

¹⁴ Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD,^a the child that is born to you shall die.”

¹⁵ Then Nathan went to his house.

And the LORD struck the child that Uri’ah’s wife bore to David, and it became sick.¹⁶ David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the ground.¹⁷ And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground; but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, “Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us; how then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm.”¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; and David said to his servants, “Is the child dead?” They said, “He is dead.”²⁰ Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD, and worshiped; he then went to his own house; and when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate.²¹ Then his servants said to him,

“What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while it was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.”²² He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’²³ But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”

²⁴ Then David comforted his wife, Bathshe’ba, and went in to her, and lay with her; and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him,²⁵ and sent a message by Nathan the prophet; so he called his name Jedidi’ah,^b because of the LORD.

²⁶ Now Jo’ab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites, and took the royal city.²⁷ And Jo’ab sent messengers to David, and said, “I have fought against Rabbah; moreover, I have taken the city of waters.²⁸ Now, then, gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take the city, and it be called by my name.”²⁹ So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, and fought against it and took it.³⁰ And he took the crown of their king^c from his head; the weight of it was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David’s head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city, a very great amount.

³¹ And he brought forth the people who were in it, and set them to labor with

^a Heb *the enemies of the LORD*

^b That is *beloved of the LORD*

^c Or *Milcom* See Zeph 1.5

talionis (law of exact retaliation, Ex.21.23–25; Lev.24.19–21; Dt.19.21) David should have died. Instead, divine judgment fell upon the child, according to the ideas of that day, as a special favor to David. The sin is *against the LORD*; it is God who sets the moral standard, not man. **23:** This verse reflects the idea of Sheol, the cavity under the earth where all the dead go (see Gen.37.35 n.; 1 Sam.2.6–7 n.), and from which there is no return (Job 7.9–10).

12.26–31: Conclusion of the campaign against Ammon. David takes the Ammonite capital. **26:** *Rabbah of the Ammonites* was the full name of the city, called more briefly Rabbath-Ammon or simply Rabbah. **27:** *The city of waters* means the place protecting the water supply. **28–29:** *Joab* was always careful to keep himself subservient to *David*. The word *people* here refers to the army. **30:** *Milcom* (see note c), the god of the Ammonites, may be the better reading (compare 1 Kg.11.5); if so, the reference is to an image of the god. *The weight* (a *talent*, about sixty-five lbs.) may be exaggerated.

saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them toil at^d the brickkilns; and thus he did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

13 Now Ab'salom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. ² And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jon'adab, the son of Shim'e-ah, David's brother; and Jon'adab was a very crafty man. ⁴ And he said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Ab'salom's sister." ⁵ Jon'adab said to him, "Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be ill; and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it from her hand.'"^e ⁶ So Amnon lay down, and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Pray let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

⁷ Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." ⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. And she took dough, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. ⁹ And she took the pan and

emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Send out every one from me." So every one went out from him. ¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. ¹¹ But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." ¹² She answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this wanton folly. ¹³ As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the wanton fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." ¹⁴ But he would not listen to her; and being stronger than she, he forced her, and lay with her.

¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred; so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone." ¹⁶ But she said to him, "No, my brother; for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other which you did to me"^e But he would not listen to her. ¹⁷ He called the young man who served him and said, "Put this woman out of my presence, and bolt the door after her." ¹⁸ Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves; for thus were the virgin daughters of the king clad of old.^f So his servant put her

^d Cn: Heb *pass through*

^e Cn Compare Gk Vg: Heb *No, for this great wrong in sending me away is (worse) than the other which you did to me* ^f Cn: Heb *clad in robes*

13.1-20.26: The story of Absalom. The ensuing events show what a later editor meant by *evil . . . out of your own house* (12.11). The actions of Absalom brought forth a series of political crises, with decisive effect on the future of the nation. The deaths of Amnon and Absalom opened the way for Solomon (12.24) to become king, though he was originally far down in the line of succession (3.2-5; 1 Kg. ch. 1).

13.1-39: Tamar raped by Amnon; Absalom has Amnon murdered and flees from the court. **1:** Tamar was a full sister of Absalom, a half sister of Amnon. The latter, being the eldest son of David (3.2), would normally have succeeded David as king. Chileab, the second son (3.3), seems to have died young, leaving Absalom as the next in line of succession to the throne; this fact must be borne in mind as one considers the deeds of Absalom. **13:** At that time a man could marry his half sister, though later this practice was forbidden (Lev.18.9). **19:** On these

out, and bolted the door after her.
¹⁹ And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent the long robe which she wore; and she laid her hand on her head, and went away, crying aloud as she went.

²⁰ And her brother Ab'salom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart." So Tamar dwelt, a desolate woman, in her brother Ab'salom's house.
²¹ When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry.
²² But Ab'salom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Ab'salom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

²³ After two full years Ab'salom had sheepshearers at Ba'al-ha'zor, which is near E'phraim, and Ab'salom invited all the king's sons.
²⁴ And Ab'salom came to the king, and said, "Behold, your servant has sheepshearers; pray let the king and his servants go with your servant."
²⁵ But the king said to Ab'salom, "No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you." He pressed him, but he would not go but gave him his blessing.
²⁶ Then Ab'salom said, "If not, pray let my brother Amnon go with us." And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?"
²⁷ But Ab'salom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.
²⁸ Then Ab'salom commanded his servants, "Mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Fear not; have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant."
²⁹ So the servants of Ab'salom did to Amnon as Ab'salom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each mounted his mule and fled.

³⁰ While they were on the way, tidings came to David, "Ab'salom has slain all the king's sons, and not one of them is left."
³¹ Then the king arose, and rent his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants who were standing by rent their garments.
³² But Jon'adab the son of Shim'e-ah, David's brother, said, "Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead, for by the command of Ab'salom this has been determined from the day he forced his sister Tamar."
³³ Now therefore let not my lord the king so take it to heart as to suppose that all the king's sons are dead; for Amnon alone is dead."

³⁴ But Ab'salom fled. And the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the Hor-na'im road^g by the side of the mountain.
³⁵ And Jon'adab said to the king, "Behold, the king's sons have come; as your servant said, so it has come about."
³⁶ And as soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept; and the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly.

³⁷ But Ab'salom fled, and went to Talmi the son of Ammi'hud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son day after day.
³⁸ So Ab'salom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.
³⁹ And the spirit^h of the king longed to go forth to Ab'salom; for he was comforted about Amnon, seeing he was dead.

14 Now Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah perceived that the king's heart went out to Ab'salom.
² And Jo'ab sent

^g Cn Compare Gk: Heb *the road behind him*
^h Gk: Heb *David*

signs of grief see 15.32; 2 Kg.5.7; Est.4.1; Jer.2.37. **23-29:** Festivities at the time of sheepshearing were usual (1 Sam.25.4-13). **37:** *Absalom fled* to the land of his maternal grandfather (3.3). As an Aramean kingdom (15.8), *Geshur* was under the military control of David (8.3-8; 10.6-19).

14.1-33: Joab brings about the return of Absalom. This incident is another manifestation of the power and influence of *Joab*, who had a way of taking things into his own hands, though he carefully remained subservient to David (v. 22 and 12.28). **2:** *Tekoa*, a few miles south of Bethlehem, and thus in the home territory of David and Joab. Perhaps this helps to explain

to Teko'a, and fetched from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning garments; do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead; ³ and go to the king, and speak thus to him." So Jo'ab put the words in her mouth.

4 When the woman of Teko'a came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, "Help, O king." ⁵ And the king said to her, "What is your trouble?" She answered, "Alas, I am a widow; my husband is dead. ⁶ And your handmaid had two sons, and they quarreled with one another in the field; there was no one to part them, and one struck the other and killed him. ⁷ And now the whole family has risen against your handmaid, and they say, 'Give up the man who struck his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew'; and so they would destroy the heir also. Thus they would quench my coal which is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant upon the face of the earth."

8 Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you." ⁹ And the woman of Teko'a said to the king, "On me be the guilt, my lord the king, and on my father's house; let the king and his throne be guiltless." ¹⁰ The king said, "If any one says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall never touch you again." ¹¹ Then she said, "Pray let the king invoke the LORD your God, that the avenger of blood slay no more, and my son be not destroyed." He said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

12 Then the woman said, "Pray let your handmaid speak a word to my lord the king." He said, "Speak." ¹³ And the woman said, "Why then have you planned such a thing against

the people of God? For in giving this decision the king convicts himself, inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again. ¹⁴ We must all die, we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; but God will not take away the life of him who devisesⁱ means not to keep his banished one an outcast.

¹⁵ Now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid; and your handmaid thought, 'I will speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his servant. ¹⁶ For the king will hear, and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the heritage of God.' ¹⁷ And your handmaid thought, 'The word of my lord the king will set me at rest'; for my lord the king is like the angel of God to discern good and evil. The LORD your God be with you!"

18 Then the king answered the woman, "Do not hide from me anything I ask you." And the woman said, "Let my lord the king speak." ¹⁹ The king said, "Is the hand of Jo'ab with you in all this?" The woman answered and said, "As surely as you live, my lord the king, one cannot turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has said. It was your servant Jo'ab who bade me; it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your handmaid. ²⁰ In order to change the course of affairs your servant Jo'ab did this. But my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on the earth."

21 Then the king said to Jo'ab, "Behold now, I grant this; go, bring back the young man Ab'salom." ²² And Jo'ab fell on his face to the ground, and did obeisance, and blessed the king; and Jo'ab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your

i Cn: Heb and he devises

why the king allowed the woman to speak so long and so freely with him. 7: The use of the word *heir* by the woman is a good indication that Absalom was expected to succeed David as king.

sight, my lord the king, in that the king has granted the request of his servant.”²³ So Jo’ab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Ab’salom to Jerusalem.²⁴ And the king said, “Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence.” So Ab’salom dwelt apart in his own house, and did not come into the king’s presence.

25 Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his beauty as Ab’salom; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.²⁶ And when he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; when it was heavy on him, he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king’s weight.²⁷ There were born to Ab’salom three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar; she was a beautiful woman.

28 So Ab’salom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, without coming into the king’s presence.²⁹ Then Ab’salom sent for Jo’ab, to send him to the king; but Jo’ab would not come to him. And he sent a second time, but Jo’ab would not come.³⁰ Then he said to his servants, “See, Jo’ab’s field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire.” So Ab’salom’s servants set the field on fire.³¹ Then Jo’ab arose and went to Ab’salom at his house, and said to him, “Why have your servants set my field on fire?”³² Ab’salom answered Jo’ab,

“Behold, I sent word to you, ‘Come here, that I may send you to the king, to ask, “Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still.” Now therefore let me go into the presence of the king; and if there is guilt in me, let him kill me.’”³³ Then Jo’ab went to the king, and told him; and he summoned Ab’salom. So he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Ab’salom.

15 After this Ab’salom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him.² And Ab’salom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate; and when any man had a suit to come before the king for judgment, Ab’salom would call to him, and say, “From what city are you?” And when he said, “Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel,”³ Ab’salom would say to him, “See, your claims are good and right; but there is no man deputed by the king to hear you.”⁴ Ab’salom said moreover, “Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a suit or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice.”⁵ And whenever a man came near to do obeisance to him, he would put out his hand, and take hold of him, and kiss him.⁶ Thus Ab’salom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Ab’salom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 And at the end of four¹ years

j Gk Syr: Heb forty

26: There were at least two standards of *weight* at that time, the common and the royal, or the *king's weight*. The latter was somewhat heavier; *two hundred shekels* would have been roughly five pounds. **27:** Absalom seems to have named his daughter after his ravished sister, Tamar. The information in this verse is doubtless correct; contrast 18.18. **28:** It was very likely during this period that Absalom began to plot revolt. Some have blamed David for delaying the reconciliation too long

15.1-37: Absalom revolts and David flees from Jerusalem. Since *Absalom* was the natural heir to the throne (see 14.7 n.), it may be asked why he revolted during David’s lifetime. Primogeniture was the normal practice in Israel (2 Sam.2.8-10; Dt.21.15-17), but there were exceptions (1 Chr.5.1-2; 26.10). David himself had established a new dynasty, and had failed to lay down a law of succession (1 Kg.1.27). Absalom, knowing that he had once been out of favor with his father, may have feared that something similar would happen again. Or perhaps, like Amnon, he simply could not wait for what he wanted so badly. **1-6:** *Chariot and horses, and fifty men*, compare 1 Kg.1.5. Absalom attacks another weakness of David’s administration, the failure to establish a judiciary system, with consequent delay in the hearing of cases. David

Ab'salom said to the king, "Pray let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron. ⁸ For your servant vowed a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the LORD.'" ⁹ The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose, and went to Hebron. ¹⁰ But Ab'salom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Ab'salom is king at Hebron!'" ¹¹ With Ab'salom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their simplicity, and knew nothing. ¹² And while Ab'salom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for^k Ahith'opel the Gi'lonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Ab'salom kept increasing.

¹³ And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Ab'salom." ¹⁴ Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee; or else there will be no escape for us from Ab'salom; go in haste, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." ¹⁵ And the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king decides." ¹⁶ So the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten concubines to

keep the house. ¹⁷ And the king went forth, and all the people after him; and they halted at the last house. ¹⁸ And all his servants passed by him; and all the Cher'ethites, and all the Pel'ethites, and all the six hundred Gittites who had followed him from Gath, passed on before the king.

¹⁹ Then the king said to It'tai the Gittite, "Why do you also go with us? Go back, and stay with the king; for you are a foreigner, and also an exile from^l your home. ²⁰ You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander about with us, seeing I go I know not where? Go back, and take your brethren with you; and may the LORD show^m steadfast love and faithfulness to you." ²¹ But It'tai answered the king, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be." ²² And David said to It'tai, "Go then, pass on." So It'tai the Gittite passed on, with all his men and all the little ones who were with him. ²³ And all the country wept aloud as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed on toward the wilderness.

²⁴ And Abi'athar came up, and lo, Zadok came also, with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God, until the people had all passed out of the city. ²⁵ Then the king said to

^k Or sent

^l Gk Syr Vg: Heb to

^m Gk: Heb lacks may the LORD show

was better as a military leader than as a peace-time organizer. **7-12:** The conspiracy was carefully nurtured for a period of *four years*. Absalom could have worshiped in Jerusalem, but he had probably found disaffection in Hebron over the loss of status as the capital city. *Ahithophel the Gilonite* was perhaps the grandfather of Bathsheba (compare 11.3 with 23.34). If so, he may have resented David's conduct with his granddaughter in spite of the higher status which it brought to the family. **13-18:** David flees Jerusalem, perhaps feeling that he would have an advantage by fighting in the open country. He probably also suspected the loyalty of some of those around him; by leaving, he could find out who would follow him regardless of circumstances, and at the same time he could leave behind his agents to work secretly for him in the city. See the superscription to Ps. 3. *Ten concubines*, see 5.13-16 n. *Cherethites* and . . . *Pelethites*, see 8.18 n. *Gittites* (rather than "Gathites") is the proper form designating people from Gath. It is rather surprising to find so many Philistines in David's army. **23:** The weeping of the people indicates that the king retained much popular support. The brook Kidron marked

Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his habitation;" ²⁶ but if he says, 'I have no pleasure in you,' behold, here I am, let him do to me what seems good to him." ²⁷ The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Look," go back to the city in peace, you and Abi'athar,^o with your two sons, Ahim'a-az your son, and Jonathan the son of Abi'athar. ²⁸ See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness, until word comes from you to inform me." ²⁹ So Zadok and Abi'athar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem; and they remained there.

³⁰ But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered; and all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. ³¹ And it was told David, "Ahith'ophel is among the conspirators with Ab'salom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahith'ophel into foolishness."

³² When David came to the summit, where God was worshiped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent and earth upon his head. ³³ David said to him, "If you go on with me, you will be a burden to me. ³⁴ But if you return to the city, and say to Ab'salom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so now I will be your servant,' then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahith'ophel."

³⁵ Are not Zadok and Abi'athar the priests with you there? So whatever you hear from the king's house, tell it to Zadok and Abi'athar the priests. ³⁶ Behold, their two sons are with them there, Ahim'a-az, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abi'athar's son; and by them you shall send to me everything you hear." ³⁷ So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, just as Ab'salom was entering Jerusalem.

16 When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephib'osheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine. ² And the king said to Ziba, "Why have you brought these?" Ziba answered, "The asses are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink." ³ And the king said, "And where is your master's son?" Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he remains in Jerusalem; for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.'" ⁴ Then the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that belonged to Mephib'osheth is now yours." And Ziba said, "I do obeisance; let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king."

⁵ When King David came to Bahu'rim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose

ⁿ Gk: Heb *Are you a seer or Do you see?*
^o Cn: Heb lacks *and Abiathar*

the eastern boundary of the city. **24-37:** David's leaving *the ark* in Jerusalem was a fair indication that he expected to return. It was also good diplomacy to have the loyal priests in the city (vv. 35-36). On *Zadok*, see 8.17 n. *Abiathar* and *Ahimaaz* (v. 27) have been mentioned as possible authors of the Early Source (see Introduction to 1 Samuel). *Hushai the Archite, David's friend* (i.e. "royal counselor," an official title, 1 Kg.4.5), came from an originally Canaanite group settled near Bethel (Jos.16.2). Under David's inclusive policy, various non-Israelite groups (Hittites, Philistines, Canaanites, and the like) became naturalized. These people seem to have been particularly loyal to David, perhaps partly because of his policies and personality, partly because he himself was not an Israelite (19.11-15).

16.1-23: David in flight; Absalom takes over Jerusalem. **1-4:** *Mephibosheth*, see ch. 9 and notes there. *Ziba* was probably lying for his own advantage; see Mephibosheth's defense in 19.24-30. David, perhaps disturbed by the reference to the dynasty of Saul, here makes too hasty a decision. **5-14:** The disaffection in Judah over loss of the capital has already been noted (see 15.7-

name was Shim'e-i, the son of Gera; and as he came he cursed continually. ⁶ And he threw stones at David, and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. ⁷ And Shim'e-i said as he cursed, "Begone, begone, you man of blood, you worthless fellow!" ⁸ The LORD has avenged upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Ab'salom. See, your ruin is on you; for you are a man of blood."

⁹ Then Abi'shai the son of Zeru'iah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head."

¹⁰ But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeru'iah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

¹¹ And David said to Abi'shai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD has bidden him. ¹² It may be that the LORD will look upon my affliction,^p and that the LORD will repay me with good for this cursing of me today."

¹³ So David and his men went on the road, while Shim'e-i went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him and flung dust. ¹⁴ And the king, and all the people who were with him, arrived weary at the Jordan;^q and there he refreshed himself.

¹⁵ Now Ab'salom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahith'ophel with him.

¹⁶ And when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Ab'salom, Hushai said to Ab'salom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!" ¹⁷ And Ab'salom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?" ¹⁸ And Hushai said to Ab'salom, "No; for whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain. ¹⁹ And again, whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? As I have served your father, so I will serve you."

²⁰ Then Ab'salom said to Ahith'ophel, "Give your counsel; what shall we do?" ²¹ Ahith'ophel said to Ab'salom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened." ²² So they pitched a tent for Ab'salom upon the roof; and Ab'salom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. ²³ Now in those days the counsel which Ahith'ophel gave was as if one consulted the oracle^r of God; so was all the counsel of Ahith'ophel esteemed, both by David and by Ab'salom.

17 Moreover Ahith'ophel said to Ab'salom, "Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will set out and pursue David tonight. ² I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged, and throw him into a panic; and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down the king only, ³ and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband. You seek the

^p Gk Vg: Heb *iniquity*

^q Gk: Heb *lacks at the Jordan*

^r Heb *word*

12 n.); here we see the disaffection in Israel over loss of the ruling dynasty (v. 8). This time, however, David keeps a cool head and refuses to be pushed into a hasty judgment. For the result, see 19.16-23; compare 1 Kg.2.8-9. *This dead dog*, see 3.8 n. On the undue haste of a *son of Zeruiah* with the sword, see 3.39. **20-23**: The *concubines* were royal property; hence taking them over publicly was a sensational way of showing the people that Absalom had assumed the office and prerogatives of kingship (3.7; 15.16; 1 Kg.2.17-25).

17.1-23: Hushai frustrates the plan of Ahithophel. **1-14**: The plan of Ahithophel would probably have led to success for Absalom. The plan of Hushai gave the advantage to David by

life of only one man,^s and all the people will be at peace.”⁴ And the advice pleased Ab'salom and all the elders of Israel.

5 Then Ab'salom said, “Call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he has to say.”⁶ And when Hushai came to Ab'salom, Ab'salom said to him, “Thus has Ahith'ophel spoken; shall we do as he advises? If not, you speak.”⁷ Then Hushai said to Ab'salom, “This time the counsel which Ahith'ophel has given is not good.”

⁸ Hushai said moreover, “You know that your father and his men are mighty men, and that they are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Besides, your father is expert in war; he will not spend the night with the people.”⁹ Behold, even now he has hidden himself in one of the pits, or in some other place. And when some of the people fall^t at the first attack, whoever hears it will say, ‘There has been a slaughter among the people who follow Ab'salom.’¹⁰ Then even the valiant man, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will utterly melt with fear; for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and that those who are with him are valiant men.

¹¹ But my counsel is that all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, as the sand by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person.¹² So we shall come upon him in some place where he is to be found, and we shall light upon him as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and all the men with him not one will be left.¹³ If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there.”

¹⁴ And Ab'salom and all the men of Israel said, “The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahith'ophel.” For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahith'ophel, so that the LORD might bring evil upon Ab'salom.

15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abi'athar the priests, “Thus and so did Ahith'ophel counsel Ab'salom and the elders of Israel; and thus and so have I counseled.”¹⁶ Now therefore send quickly and tell David, ‘Do not lodge tonight at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means pass over; lest the king and all the people who are with him be swallowed up.’”¹⁷ Now Jonathan and Ahim'a-az were waiting at En-ro'gel; a maidservant used to go and tell them, and they would go and tell King David; for they must not be seen entering the city.¹⁸ But a lad saw them, and told Ab'salom; so both of them went away quickly, and came to the house of a man at Bahu'rim, who had a well in his courtyard; and they went down into it.¹⁹ And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and scattered grain upon it; and nothing was known of it.²⁰ When Ab'salom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, “Where are Ahim'a-az and Jonathan?” And the woman said to them, “They have gone over the brook” of water.” And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

21 After they had gone, the men came up out of the well, and went and told King David. They said to

^s Gk: Heb like the return of the whole (is) the man whom you seek

^t Or when he falls upon them

^u The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

enabling him to collect his forces for a formal battle in which experience and skill would be decisive. Recognition of these facts led to the suicide of Ahithophel (v. 23). The last sentence of v. 14 was added by an editor who wished to remind the reader that all things are *ordained* by God. **15–22:** David is informed and crosses the Jordan. Hushai did not know which way the decision had gone; hence his recommendation to cross the river immediately. *En-ro'gel* is a spring near the southeast corner of Jerusalem, now called Job's Well. *Bahurim* is east of the Mt. of Olives. Only a person with intimate knowledge of the events could have written these verses. Was the author *Abiathar*, *Ahimaaz*, or someone else? See comments on 15.27 and on the next chapter. **23:** On Biblical suicides, see 1 Sam.31.5 n.

David, "Arise, and go quickly over the water; for thus and so has Ahith'ophel counseled against you."²² Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they crossed the Jordan; by daybreak not one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

23 When Ahith'ophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and went off home to his own city. And he set his house in order, and hanged himself; and he died, and was buried in the tomb of his father.

24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Ab'salom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel.²⁵ Now Ab'salom had set Ama'sa over the army instead of Jo'ab. Ama'sa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ish'ma-elite,^v who had married Ab'igal the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeru'iah, Jo'ab's mother.²⁶ And Israel and Ab'salom encamped in the land of Gilead.

27 When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Am'mi-el from Lo'debar, and Barzil'lai the Gileadite from Ro'gelim,²⁸ brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, meal, parched grain, beans and lentils,^w honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat; for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

18 Then David mustered the men who were with him, and set over

them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.² And David sent forth the army, one third under the command of Jo'ab, one third under the command of Abi'shai the son of Zeru'iah, Jo'ab's brother, and one third under the command of It'tai the Gittite. And the king said to the men, "I myself will also go out with you."³ But the men said, "You shall not go out. For if we flee, they will not care about us. If half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us;^x therefore it is better that you send us help from the city."⁴ The king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood at the side of the gate, while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thousands.⁵ And the king ordered Jo'ab and Abi'shai and It'tai, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Ab'salom." And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Ab'salom.

6 So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was fought in the forest of E'phraim.⁷ And the men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that day, twenty thousand men.⁸ The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword.

^v 1 Chr 2.17: Heb *Israelite*

^w Heb *lentils and parched grain*

^x Gk Vg Symmachus: Heb *for now there are ten thousand such as we*

17.24-29: David in Transjordan. Amasa was a cousin of Joab; both of them were nephews of David and cousins of Absalom (1 Chr.2.13-17). The *Nahash* in v. 25 (probably an error) is not the same person as the *Nahash* of v. 27. On the latter as a friend of David, see 10.2. *Shobi*, unlike his brother Hanun, was friendly to David. It has even been proposed that David had deposed Hanun after the events of ch. 10, putting *Shobi* in his place. *Machir*, see 9.4. The Aramaean name of *Barzillai* shows him to have been a non-Israelite; see the comment on Hushai, 15.24-37 n.

18.1-8: The battle in the forest of Ephraim. 3-4: For an earlier agreement that David should remain out of the front line of battle, see 21.17; for an exception, see 12.28-29. 5: In spite of Absalom's complete apostasy, David still loved him and wished that his life might be saved. 6-8: As might have been expected, Absalom's hastily assembled forces were no match for David's standing army under skilled and experienced commanders. Great numbers of the raw recruits were driven into *the forest*, a trackless jungle, from which there was no escape. The number *twenty thousand* is an overgenerous estimate; there was no counting before or after the battle (see 12.30 n. and 1 Sam.4.10 n.).

9 And Ab'salom chanced to meet the servants of David. Ab'salom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging^y between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on.¹⁰ And a certain man saw it, and told Jo'ab, "Behold, I saw Ab'salom hanging in an oak."¹¹ Jo'ab said to the man who told him, "What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a girdle."¹² But the man said to Jo'ab, "Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not put forth my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abi'shai and It'tai, 'For my sake protect the young man Ab'salom.'¹³ On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life^z (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof."¹⁴ Jo'ab said, "I will not waste time like this with you." And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Ab'salom, while he was still alive in the oak.¹⁵ And ten young men, Jo'ab's armor-bearers, surrounded Ab'salom and struck him, and killed him.

16 Then Jo'ab blew the trumpet, and the troops came back from pursuing Israel; for Jo'ab restrained them.¹⁷ And they took Ab'salom, and threw him into a great pit

in the forest, and raised over him a very great heap of stones; and all Israel fled every one to his own home.¹⁸ Now Ab'salom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance"; he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called Ab'salom's monument to this day.

19 Then said Ahi'ma-az the son of Zadok, "Let me run, and carry tidings to the king that the LORD has delivered him from the power of his enemies."²⁰ And Jo'ab said to him, "You are not to carry tidings today; you may carry tidings another day, but today you shall carry no tidings, because the king's son is dead."²¹ Then Jo'ab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed before Jo'ab, and ran.²² Then Ahi'ma-az the son of Zadok said again to Jo'ab, "Come what may, let me also run after the Cushite." And Jo'ab said, "Why will you run, my son, seeing that you will have no reward for the tidings?"²³ "Come what may," he said, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahi'ma-az ran by the way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

24 Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone.²⁵ And the watchman called out and

^y Gk Syr Tg: Heb was put

^z Another reading is *at the risk of my life*

18.9-18: The death of Absalom. There is a popular notion, based on 14.26, that Absalom was caught by his hair. The present text implies that his whole *head* was caught (v. 9). Joab never withheld a fatal blow when he felt that it would be to his own or David's advantage (3.27; 20.10). Verse 15 seems unnecessary and may have been added later. **16-18:** These verses show that Absalom's tomb was very different from what he had intended; he had prepared for himself a showy monument near Jerusalem. The statement about his having *no son* appears to be an error (compare 14.27). The monument commonly called "Absalom's Tomb," still standing today in the Kidron valley, is of Hellenistic or Roman date, and has no connection with the original *Absalom's monument*.

18.19-33: The grief of David. The story in these verses provides the reason why many commentators believe *Ahimaaz the son of Zadok* to be the author of the Early Source. In any case, such detailed information about the incident could have come only from *the son of Zadok*. Ahimaaz was too excited to remain behind, yet when he faced *the king* he lacked the courage

told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there are tidings in his mouth." And he came apace, and drew near. ²⁶ And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called to the gate and said, "See, another man running alone!" The king said, "He also brings tidings." ²⁷ And the watchman said, "I think the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahi'ma-az the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good man, and comes with good tidings."

²⁸ Then Ahi'ma-az cried out to the king, "All is well." And he bowed before the king with his face to the earth, and said, "Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king." ²⁹ And the king said, "Is it well with the young man Ab'salom?" Ahi'ma-az answered, "When Jo'ab sent your servant,^b I saw a great tumult, but I do not know what it was." ³⁰ And the king said, "Turn aside, and stand here." So he turned aside, and stood still.

³¹ And behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, "Good tidings for my lord the king! For the LORD has delivered you this day from the power of all who rose up against you." ³² The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Ab'salom?" And the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you for evil, be like that young man." ^{33a} And the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, "O my son Ab'salom, my son, my son Ab'salom! Would I had died instead of you, O Ab'salom, my son, my son!"

¹⁹ It was told Jo'ab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Ab'salom." ² So the victory that day

was turned into mourning for all the people; for the people heard that day, "The king is grieving for his son." ³ And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle. ⁴ The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, "O my son Ab'salom, O Ab'salom, my son, my son!" ⁵ Then Jo'ab came into the house to the king, and said, "You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life, and the lives of your sons and your daughters, and the lives of your wives and your concubines, ⁶ because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you; for today I perceive that if Ab'salom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. ⁷ Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants; for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night; and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now." ⁸ Then the king arose, and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate"; and all the people came before the king.

Now Israel had fled every man to his own home. ⁹ And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies, and saved us from the hand of the Philistines; and now he has fled out of the land from Ab'salom. ¹⁰ But Ab'salom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?"

^b Heb *the King's servant, your servant*
^c Ch 19.1 in Heb

to tell the whole story, as Joab had foreseen. **31-33:** It remained for the Ethiopian slave (*the Cushite*; compare Jer.13.23; 38.7; 39.16-18) to reveal the true state of affairs. In his personal grief, David momentarily forgot his military victory and his public duties.

19.1-43: David attempts to restore a divided and disorganized nation. **1-8a:** It was only Joab who could speak realistically to the king about his royal obligations. **8b-10:** The Israelites made the first overtures to renew allegiance to David. **11-15:** David appeals to the Judahites

11 And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abi'athar the priests, "Say to the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king?'"

¹² You are my kinsmen, you are my bone and my flesh; why then should you be the last to bring back the king?"

¹³ And say to Ama'sa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of my army henceforth in place of Jo'ab.'" ¹⁴ And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man; so that they sent word to the king, "Return, both you and all your servants." ¹⁵ So the king came back to the Jordan; and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.

16 And Shim'e-i the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahu'rim, made haste to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David; ¹⁷ and with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king, ¹⁸ and they crossed the ford^e to bring over the king's household, and to do his pleasure. And Shim'e-i the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, ¹⁹ and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem; let not the king bear it in mind. ²⁰ For your servant knows that I have sinned; therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."

²¹ Abi'shai the son of Zeru'iah answered, "Shall not Shim'e-i be put to

death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?" ²² But David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeru'iah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall any one be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?" ²³ And the king said to Shim'e-i, "You shall not die." And the king gave him his oath.

²⁴ And Mephib'osheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; he had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety. ²⁵ And when he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephib'osheth?" ²⁶ He answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me; for your servant said to him, 'Saddle an ass for me,^g that I may ride upon it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame. ²⁷ He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. ²⁸ For all my father's house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king; but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?" ²⁹ And the king said to him, "Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land." ³⁰ And Mephib'osheth said to the king, "Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home."

31 Now Barzil'lai the Gileadite had come down from Ro'gelim; and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan. ³² Bar-

^d Gk: Heb to the king, to his house

^e Cn: Heb the ford crossed

^f Heb to

^g Gk Syr Vg: Heb said, I will saddle an ass for myself

on the basis of tribal loyalty and by giving Joab's position to Amasa. On Amasa's kinship to David and Joab, see 17.24–29 n. David no doubt resented Joab's killing of Absalom (18.14) and also remembered the case of Abner (3.27–29). **16–23:** *Shimei* and *Ziba* rushed to pay homage to David (compare 16.1–14). David forgave *Shimei*. *House of Joseph* (v. 20), another name for the northern tribes or Israel. **24–30:** See ch. 9 and 16.1–5. David had made a hasty decision in Ziba's case against Mephibosheth. Now, confronted by both parties, the king seemed unable to make a firm decision, though Mephibosheth's evidences of loyalty (v. 24) and

z'il'lai was a very aged man, eighty years old; and he had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahan-a'im; for he was a very wealthy man.

³³ And the king said to Barz'il'lai, "Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem."

³⁴ But Barz'il'lai said to the king, "How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

³⁵ I am this day eighty years old; can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?

³⁶ Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king recompense me with such a reward? ³⁷ Pray let your servant return, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do for him whatever seems good to you."

³⁸ And the king answered, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you; and all that you desire of me I will do for you."

³⁹ Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over; and the king kissed Barz'il'lai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home.

⁴⁰ The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him; all the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way.

⁴¹ Then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, "Why have our brethren the men of

Judah stolen you away, and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?"

⁴² All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is near of kin to us. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?" ⁴³ And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?" But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

20 Now there happened to be there a worthless fellow, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite; and he blew the trumpet, and said,

"We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"

² So all the men of Israel withdrew from David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

³ And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten concubines whom he had left to care for the house, and put them in a house under guard, and provided for them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as if in widowhood.

⁴ Then the king said to Ama'sa, "Call the men of Judah together to me within three days, and be here yourself." ⁵ So Ama'sa went to sum-

self-abnegation (vv. 28,30) appear genuine. **31-40a:** It is usually assumed that *Chimham* was the son of *Barzillai*, though the text does not specifically so state (compare 1 Kg.2.7). **40b:** The word *all* is something of an exaggeration, signifying that by this time Judah was solidly in favor of David, whereas Israel was hardly more than half persuaded (compare 20.2). **41-43:** The antagonism between *Israel* and *Judah* breaks out again. In the light of this passage, it can be seen that the final division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon (1 Kg.12.16-20) had its roots in an old cleavage.

20.1-22: New revolt in Israel; Joab murders Amasa, regains his position, and quells the revolt. **1-2:** It is significant that *Sheba* came from Benjamin, the most disaffected tribe (compare 16.5,8). The war cry is repeated in 1 Kg.12.16. **3:** See 6.23 n. **4-13:** The delay of *Amasa* showed David

mon Judah; but he delayed beyond the set time which had been appointed him. ⁶ And David said to Abi'shai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Ab'salom; take your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get himself fortified cities, and cause us trouble."^h ⁷ And there went out after Abi'shai, Jo'abⁱ and the Cher'ethites and the Pel'ethites, and all the mighty men; they went out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri. ⁸ When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Ama'sa came to meet them. Now Jo'ab was wearing a soldier's garment, and over it was a girdle with a sword in its sheath fastened upon his loins, and as he went forward it fell out. ⁹ And Jo'ab said to Ama'sa, "Is it well with you, my brother?" And Jo'ab took Ama'sa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. ¹⁰ But Ama'sa did not observe the sword which was in Jo'ab's hand; so Jo'ab struck him with it in the body, and shed his bowels to the ground, without striking a second blow; and he died.

Then Jo'ab and Abi'shai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri. ¹¹ And one of Jo'ab's men took his stand by Ama'sa, and said, "Whoever favors Jo'ab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Jo'ab." ¹² And Ama'sa lay wallowing in his blood in the highway. And any one who came by, seeing him, stopped;^j and when the man saw that all the people stopped, he carried Ama'sa out of the highway into the field, and threw a garment over him. ¹³ When he was taken out of the highway, all the peo-

ple went on after Jo'ab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

¹⁴ And Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Bethma'acah;^k and all the Bichrites^l assembled, and followed him in. ¹⁵ And all the men who were with Jo'ab came and besieged him in Abel of Bethma'acah; they cast up a mound against the city, and it stood against the rampart; and they were battering the wall, to throw it down. ¹⁶ Then a wise woman called from the city, "Hear! Hear! Tell Jo'ab, 'Come here, that I may speak to you.'" ¹⁷ And he came near her; and the woman said, "Are you Jo'ab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your maidservant." And he answered, "I am listening." ¹⁸ Then she said, "They were wont to say in old time, 'Let them but ask counsel at Abel'; and so they settled a matter. ¹⁹ I am one of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel; you seek to destroy a city which is a mother in Israel; why will you swallow up the heritage of the LORD?" ²⁰ Jo'ab answered, "Far be it from me, far be it, that I should swallow up or destroy! ²¹ That is not true. But a man of the hill country of E'phraim, called Sheba the son of Bichri, has lifted up his hand against King David; give up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." And the woman said to Jo'ab, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to you over the wall." ²² Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. And they cut

^h Tg: Heb *snatch away our eyes*

ⁱ Cn Compare Gk: Heb *after him Joab's men*

^j This clause is transposed from the end of the verse

^k With 20.15: Heb *and Beth-maacah* ^l Heb *Berites*

that the new commander was not equal to Joab; but the king was too proud to approach Joab directly. Hence he called upon Abishai, Joab's brother, knowing that Joab would soon take the initiative (note the order of names in v. 10b and the name of Joab alone in v. 13). On the *Cher'ethites* and the *Pelethites* (v. 7), see 8.18 n. **14-22:** Joab was now in complete command of the army and of the situation. Joab showed his energy and efficiency in pursuing the rebel to this remote spot. **14:** The *Bichrites* were the members of Sheba's own clan (v. 1), perhaps the only followers remaining to him. **18:** This verse is not clear in the original, but it would seem that the town had a reputation for wisdom and the settling of disputes. **19:** *A city which is a mother in Israel* means one that had dependent villages called "daughters" (compare *villages*, literally "daughters," in Num.21.25,32; Jos.15.45; Jg.11.26). The story continues in 1 Kg. chs. 1-2.

20.23-26: A list of David's officials, added by an editor; it seems to be another version of the

off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Jo'ab. So he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city, every man to his home. And Jo'ab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

23 Now Jo'ab was in command of all the army of Israel; and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada was in command of the Cher'ethites and the Pel'ethites; 24 and Ador'am was in charge of the forced labor; and Jehosh'aphat the son of Ahi'lud was the recorder; 25 and Sheva was secretary; and Zadok and Abi'athar were priests; 26 and Ira the Ja'irite was also David's priest.

21 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, "There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gib'eonites to death." 2 So the king called the Gib'eonites.^m Now the Gib'eonites were not of the people of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; although the people of Israel had sworn to spare them, Saul had sought to slay them in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah. 3 And David said to the Gib'eonites, "What shall I do for you? And how shall I make expiation,

that you may bless the heritage of the LORD?" 4 The Gib'eonites said to him, "It is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "What do you say that I shall do for you?"

5 They said to the king, "The man who consumed us and planned to destroy us, so that we should have no place in all the territory of Israel, 6 let seven of his sons be given to us, so that we may hang them up before the LORD at Gibeon on the mountain of the LORD." And the king said, "I will give them."

7 But the king spared Mephib'osheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the LORD which was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. 8 The king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Ai'ah, whom she bore to Saul, Armo'ni and Mephib'osheth; and the five sons of Merab^o the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to A'dri-el the son of Barzil'lai the Meho'lathite; 9 and he gave them into the hands of the Gib'eonites, and they hanged them

^m Heb the Gibeonites and said to them

ⁿ Cn Compare Gk and 21.9: Heb at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD

^o Two Hebrew Mss Gk: Heb Michal

similar list in 8.16-18 (see note there). Perhaps it was inserted here to emphasize that *Joab* was again in command. *Adoram* (or *Adoniram*) kept his position under Solomon (1 Kg.4.6). The institution of *forced labor* was one of the causes of the final division of the kingdom (1 Kg. 12.18-19). *Ira the Jairite* was from Gilead, a territory which had welcomed *David* when he was in flight before Absalom (compare Num.32.40-41).

21.1-24.25: This section is something of an appendix to 2 Samuel, included, according to one theory, when chs. 9-20 were restored (see ch. 8 n.), and causing an interruption of the main narrative. Some of the material is late, but some of it belongs to the Early Source, though it is out of order here, as will be noted below.

21.1-14: The famine and the execution of the descendants of Saul. This passage (probably with ch. 24) belongs before ch. 9 and should be read in connection with that chapter; see note at end of ch. 6. The time is the early part of David's reign. 1: There is no record of the occasion upon which *Saul . . . put the Gibeonites to death*. Apparently Saul was highly intolerant of non-Israelite elements in his kingdom, in contrast to the inclusive policy of David (see 15.24-37 n.). *David* heard a complaint from the *Gibeonites*, which he took as the voice of God, connected with the *famine*. The notion of *blood guilt* was based on the *lex talionis* (see 12.13-14 n.). 2: For the story of the original contact with the *Gibeonites*, see Jos.9.3-27. The pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine are sometimes called *Canaanites*, sometimes *Amorites*. 6: The number *seven* was thought to have special significance. 7: In ch. 9, which should follow the present passage, David knows nothing of Mephibosheth; hence this verse is a note added by an editor after the present passage was displaced. 8: Only *two sons* of Saul were found; the other *five* were grandsons. On *Rizpah*, see 3.7. The *Mephibosheth* of this verse is not the same person as

on the mountain before the LORD, and the seven of them perished together. They were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the beginning of barley harvest.

10 Then Rizpah the daughter of Ai'ah took sackcloth, and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until rain fell upon them from the heavens; and she did not allow the birds of the air to come upon them by day, or the beasts of the field by night. ¹¹ When David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Ai'ah, the concubine of Saul, had done, ¹² David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of his son Jonathan from the men of Ja'besht-gil'ead, who had stolen them from the public square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, on the day the Philistines killed Saul on Gilbo'a; ¹³ and he brought up from there the bones of Saul and the bones of his son Jonathan; and they gathered the bones of those who were hanged. ¹⁴ And they buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the land of Benjamin in Zela, in the tomb of Kish his father; and they did all that the king commanded. And

after that God heeded supplications for the land.

15 The Philistines had war again with Israel, and David went down together with his servants, and they fought against the Philistines; and David grew weary. ¹⁶ And Ish'bi-be'nob, one of the descendants of the giants, whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of bronze, and who was girded with a new sword, thought to kill David. ¹⁷ But Abi'shai the son of Zeru'iah came to his aid, and attacked the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men adjured him, "You shall no more go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

18 After this there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; then Sib'becai the Hu'shathite slew Saph, who was one of the descendants of the giants. ¹⁹ And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; and Elha'nan the son of Ja'areor'egim, the Bethlehemite, slew Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. ²⁰ And there was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on

the son of Jonathan in v. 7 and ch. 9. 10: The *beginning of the harvest* was in late April or May; rain does not fall in Palestine from that time until late autumn; hence the bodies were exposed all summer. The law of Dt.21.22-23 was not yet in effect; the long exposure (an added insult to the deceased; compare 1 Sam.31.10-13) was doubtless a part of the expiation which David was cooperating with the Gibeonites to bring about. 11-14: The amazing vigil of Rizpah had doubtless excited much sympathy. David began to feel that the expiation had been overdone, and that it was time to do something favorable to the memory of Saul to avoid repercussions from partisans of the late king. Also, the beginning of rain had marked the end of the famine. For these reasons, the great public mass burial, including the bones of Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam.31.11-13), seemed in order. After this, the favors to Mephibosheth related in ch. 9 follow logically.

21.15-22: **Exploits in the war against the Philistines.** This brief fragment (probably with 23.8-39) belongs just after ch. 5, being a part of the now partially lost story of David's victory over the Philistines. The tradition that there were giants among the Philistines here comes into full view. Another reflection of this idea is in 1 Sam. ch. 17. Some have supposed that these giants were the descendants of the Anakim, who had been defeated earlier by the Israelites (see Num.13.22 n.; Dt.1.28). The stories may be in part exaggerations, growing out of the initial fear of the Philistines, a fear which lessened when the Israelites under David began to get the upper hand in the war. 16: Compare the figure of *three hundred shekels* with that in 1 Sam.17.7. 17: For other references to *Abishai*, see 2.18; 16.9-10; 19.21-22; 20.6-7. On the arrangement that David should stay behind, see 11.1; 12.28; 18.3-4. 19: On the problem raised by the statement that *Elhanan . . . slew Goliath*, see 1 Sam.17.4 n. and 1 Chr.20.5 n. 22: The preceding verses give no instance of a *giant who fell by the hand of David*; perhaps these words were influenced by 1 Sam. ch. 17.

each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was descended from the giants. ²¹ And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shim'e-i, David's brother, slew him. ²² These four were descended from the giants in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

22 And David spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. ² He said,

"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer,
³ my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
 my shield and the horn of my salvation,
 my stronghold and my refuge,
 my savior; thou savest me from violence.
⁴ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised,
 and I am saved from my enemies.

⁵ "For the waves of death encompassed me,
 the torrents of perdition assailed me;

⁶ the cords of Sheol entangled me,
 the snares of death confronted me.

⁷ "In my distress I called upon the LORD;
 to my God I called.
 From his temple he heard my voice,
 and my cry came to his ears.

⁸ "Then the earth reeled and rocked;
 the foundations of the heavens trembled
 and quaked, because he was angry.

⁹ Smoke went up from his nostrils,
 and devouring fire from his mouth;
 glowing coals flamed forth from him.

¹⁰ He bowed the heavens, and came down;
 thick darkness was under his feet.
¹¹ He rode on a cherub, and flew;
 he was seen upon the wings of the wind.

¹² He made darkness around him
 his canopy, thick clouds, a gathering of water.

¹³ Out of the brightness before him
 coals of fire flamed forth.

¹⁴ The LORD thundered from heaven,
 and the Most High uttered his voice.

¹⁵ And he sent out arrows, and scattered them;
 lightning, and routed them.

¹⁶ Then the channels of the sea were seen,
 the foundations of the world were laid bare,
 at the rebuke of the LORD,
 at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

¹⁷ "He reached from on high, he took me,
 he drew me out of many waters.

¹⁸ He delivered me from my strong enemy,
 from those who hated me;
 for they were too mighty for me.

¹⁹ They came upon me in the day of my calamity;
 but the LORD was my stay.

²⁰ He brought me forth into a broad place;
 he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

²¹ "The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;
 according to the cleanness of my hands he recompensed me.

²² For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
 and have not wickedly departed from my God.

p Gk Ps 18.2: Heb lacks my

22.1-51: A hymn of praise. It was the custom of certain Old Testament editors to insert poems into prose books for artistic and religious effect (see 1 Sam.2.1-10 n.). The present example is also preserved as Ps. 18, to which reference should be made.

- 23 For all his ordinances were before me,
and from his statutes I did not turn aside.
- 24 I was blameless before him,
and I kept myself from guilt.
- 25 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness in his sight.
- 26 "With the loyal thou dost show thyself loyal;
with the blameless man thou dost show thyself blameless;
- 27 with the pure thou dost show thyself pure,
and with the crooked thou dost show thyself perverse.
- 28 Thou dost deliver a humble people,
but thy eyes are upon the haughty to bring them down.
- 29 Yea, thou art my lamp, O LORD,
and my God lightens my darkness.
- 30 Yea, by thee I can crush a troop,
and by my God I can leap over a wall.
- 31 This God—his way is perfect;
the promise of the LORD proves true;
he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.
- 32 "For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?
- 33 This God is my strong refuge,
and has made^r my^s way safe.
- 34 He made my^s feet like hinds' feet,
and set me secure on the heights.
- 35 He trains my hands for war,
so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
- 36 Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation,
and thy help^t made me great.
- 37 Thou didst give a wide place for my steps under me,
and my feet^u did not slip;
- 38 I pursued my enemies and destroyed them,
and did not turn back until they were consumed.
- 39 I consumed them; I thrust them through, so that they did not rise;
they fell under my feet.
- 40 For thou didst gird me with strength for the battle;
thou didst make my assailants sink under me.
- 41 Thou didst make my enemies turn their backs to me,
those who hated me, and I destroyed them.
- 42 They looked, but there was none to save;
they cried to the LORD, but he did not answer them.
- 43 I beat them fine as the dust of the earth,
I crushed them and stamped them down like the mire of the streets.
- 44 "Thou didst deliver me from strife with the peoples;"
thou didst keep me as the head of the nations;
people whom I had not known served me.
- 45 Foreigners came cringing to me;
as soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me.
- 46 Foreigners lost heart,
and came trembling^v out of their fastnesses.
- 47 "The LORD lives; and blessed be my rock,
and exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation,
- 48 the God who gave me vengeance and brought down peoples under me,
49 who brought me out from my enemies;
thou didst exalt me above my adversaries,

^r Ps 18.32: Heb *set free*
^s Another reading is *his*
^t Or *gentleness*
^u Heb *ankles*
^v Gk: Heb *from strife with my people*
^w Ps 18.45: Heb *girded themselves*

thou didst deliver me from men of violence.

⁵⁰ "For this I will extol thee, O LORD, among the nations, and sing praises to thy name.

⁵¹ Great triumphs he gives^x to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David, and his descendants for ever."

23 Now these are the last words of David:

The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel:^y

² "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me, his word is upon my tongue.

³ The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me:

When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God,

⁴ he dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth upon a cloudless morning, like rain^z that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

⁵ Yea, does not my house stand so with God?

For he has made with me an everlasting covenant,

ordered in all things and secure.

For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?

⁶ But godless men^a are all like thorns that are thrown away; for they cannot be taken with the hand;

⁷ but the man who touches them arms himself with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they are utterly consumed with fire."^b

⁸ These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshe^c-beth a Tah-che^cmonite; he was chief of the three;^c he wielded his spear^d against eight hundred whom he slew at one time.

⁹ And next to him among the three mighty men was Elea^czar the son of Dodo, son of Aho^chi. He was with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel withdrew. ¹⁰ He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand cleaved to the sword; and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the men returned after him only to strip the slain.

¹¹ And next to him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Har^carite. The Philistines gathered together at Lehi, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils; and the men fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, and defended

^x Another reading is *He is a tower of salvation*

^y Or *the favorite of the songs of Israel*

^z Heb *from rain* ^a Heb *worthlessness*

^b Heb *fire in the sitting* ^c Or *captains*

^d 1 Chr 11.11: Heb *obscure*

23.1-7: Another hymn of praise, represented as the last words of David (see Gen.48.21-49.2 and Dt.33.1). This psalm is a late composition in the style of Ps. 1 and Pr.4.10-19, with an introduction suggestive of the oracles of Balaam (Num.24.3-4,15-16). The theme of the perpetuity of the house (dynasty) of David (v. 5) has already appeared in ch. 7 (see the concluding note there). The anointed of the God of Jacob, see 1 Sam.2.10 n. and 10.1 n. On the tradition of David as the sweet psalmist, see Introduction to the Psalms. The text of the last two verses is very corrupt, so that the exact meaning is not certain. It is also not certain whether the poem is complete as it stands or is only a fragment.

23.8-39: Other exploits in the war against the Philistines, with a roster of warriors. This passage is a continuation of 21.15-22. It is also preserved in 1 Chr.11.11-47 at a more logical place in the narrative, but with some variation in the names and details. Here there are two orders of heroes, the order of the three (v. 8) and the order of the thirty (v. 18). **8-11:** Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite is an error of a copyist; 1 Chr.11.11 has Jashobeam a Hachmonite. It has been

it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD wrought a great victory.

13 And three of the thirty chief men went down, and came about harvest time to David at the cave of Adullam, when a band of Philistines was encamped in the valley of Reph'aim. ¹⁴ David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. ¹⁵ And David said longingly, "O that some one would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"

¹⁶ Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it; he poured it out to the LORD, ¹⁷ and said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.

18 Now Abi'shai, the brother of Jo'ab, the son of Zeru'iah, was chief of the thirty.^e And he wielded his spear against three hundred men and slew them, and won a name beside the three. ¹⁹ He was the most renowned of the thirty,^f and became their commander; but he did not attain to the three.

20 And Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada was a valiant man^g of Kabzeel, a doer of great deeds; he smote two ariels^h of Moab. He also went down and slew a lion in a pit on a day when

snow had fallen. ²¹ And he slew an Egyptian, a handsome man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but Benai'ah went down to him with a staff, and snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. ²² These things did Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, and won a name beside the three mighty men. ²³ He was renowned among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three. And David set him over his bodyguard.

24 As'ahel the brother of Jo'ab was one of the thirty; Elha'nan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, ²⁵ Shammah of Harod, Eli'ka of Harod, ²⁶ Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh of Teko'a, ²⁷ Abi-e'zer, of An'athoth, Mebun'nai the Hu'shathite, ²⁸ Zalmon the Aho'hite, Ma'harai of Netoph'ah, ²⁹ Heleb the son of Ba'anah of Netoph'ah, It'tai the son of Ri'bai of Gib'e-ah of the Benjaminites, ³⁰ Benai'ah of Pira'thon, Hid'dai of the brooks of Ga'ash, ³¹ Abi-al'bon the Ar' bathite, Az'maveth of Bahu'rim, ³² Eli'ahba of Sha-al'bon, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, ³³ Shammah the Har'arite, Ahi'am the son of Sharar the Har'arite, ³⁴ Eliph'elet the son of Ahas'bai of Ma'acah, Eli'am the son of Ahith'ophel of Gilo, ³⁵ Hezroⁱ of Carmel, Pa'arai the Arbite, ³⁶ Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, ³⁷ Zelek the Ammonite, Na'harai of Be-er'oth, the armor-bearer of

^e Two Hebrew Mss Syr: MT three

^f 1 Chr 11.25: Heb *Was he the most renowned of the three?* ^g Another reading is the son of Ish-hai

^h The meaning of the word *ariel* is unknown

ⁱ Another reading is *Hezrai*

proposed that the man's original name was Ishbaal (see 2.8 n. and 11.21 n.). 13-17: This story is slightly misplaced, since it concerns *three of the thirty*, not *the three* of the preceding verses. *The thirty* are introduced in v. 18. The last sentence of v. 17 belongs after v. 12. 18-23: On *Abishai*, see 2.18; 10.10; 16.9-10; 18.2; 19.21-22; 20.6. On *Benaiah*, see 8.18; 20.23. On the *bodyguard*, see 8.18 n. *Joab* is not listed here; he had a special status as commander-in-chief (20.23). 24-39: There is some confusion in the list, and more than *thirty* names occur. Doubtless the number was not intended to be exact. 24: *Asahel the brother of Joab* was killed while David was king of Judah only (2.23); either this name was included on an honorary basis, or the organization of *the thirty* arose in the early days of David's kingship. On *Elhanan*, see 21.19 n. 33: *Shammah the Hararite* seems to be repeated from v. 11. 39: The inclusion of *Uriah the Hittite* is noteworthy (compare 11.15-17); he certainly deserved the honor. The number *thirty-seven*, added by an editor, seems to be intended to include all the names mentioned in vv. 8-39, though they total only thirty-six. It has been suggested that *Joab*, as commander-in-chief, was included in the reckoning.

Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah, ³⁸ Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ³⁹ Uri'ah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

24 Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah." ² So the king said to Jo'ab and the commanders of the army,^j who were with him, "Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people." ³ But Jo'ab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" ⁴ But the king's word prevailed against Jo'ab and the commanders of the army. So Jo'ab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel. ⁵ They crossed the Jordan, and began from Aro'er,^k and from the city that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer. ⁶ Then they came to Gilead, and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites;^l and they came to Dan, and from Dan^m they went around to Sidon, ⁷ and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites; and they went out to the Negeb of Judah at Beer-sheba. ⁸ So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. ⁹ And Jo'ab gave the

sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand.

¹⁰ But David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, I pray thee, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." ¹¹ And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹² "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offerⁿ you; choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'" ¹³ So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three^o years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me." ¹⁴ Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

¹⁵ So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; and there died of the

j 1 Chr 21.2 Gk: Heb to Joab the commander of the army

k Gk: Heb encamped in Aroer

l Gk: Heb to the land of Tahtim-hodshi

m Cn Compare Gk: Heb they came to Dan-jaan and

n Or hold over *o* 1 Chr 21.12 Gk: Heb seven

24.1-25: The census, the plague, and the building of the altar. This passage, along with 21.1-14, belongs before ch. 9. Like 21.1-14, it reflects the belief that natural calamity is caused by the wrath of God against human sin, and that this wrath must be appeased before the calamity can be stopped (compare Lk.13.1-4; Rom.1.18-23). **1:** 1 Chr.21.1 substitutes "Satan" for *the LORD* in this verse, a significant theological change. Some have wondered why it should have been considered sinful to *number Israel and Judah*. The reason must have been that taking a census was deemed an infringement upon the prerogatives of their God, the sole arbiter of the destinies of the nation and its people. **3:** Joab expressed the popular fear in the matter, but he had to yield and oversee the counting in person (v. 4). **5-7:** Those who took the census began at *Aroer* (Dt.2.36; Jos.13.9) on the east side of the Dead Sea, went north to the limits of the country, then returned on the west side to *Beersheba*. If *Kadesh*, *Sidon*, and *Tyre* were included, the census must have been taken after David's Syrian campaigns (8.3-12; 10.15-19); but these cities were not truly in Israel or Judah, even when under the control of David. **9:** The numbers here given are round numbers and incredibly high (1,300,000 fighting men alone); see 1 Sam. 4.10 n. **10-14:** We might say today that "David had an uneasy conscience" (v. 10). Most of vv. 11-14 is secondary; compare the appearance of *Gad* in another editorial passage, 1 Sam.22.5.

people from Dan to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men. ¹⁶ And when the angel stretched forth his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented of the evil, and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jeb'usite. ¹⁷ Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was smiting the people, and said, "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house."

¹⁸ And Gad came that day to David, and said to him, "Go up, rear an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jeb'usite." ¹⁹ So David went up at Gad's word, as the LORD commanded. ²⁰ And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him; and Araunah went forth, and did obeisance

to the king with his face to the ground. ²¹ And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor of you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people." ²² Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him; here are the oxen for the burnt offering, and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. ²³ All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "The LORD your God accept you." ²⁴ But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it of you for a price; I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. ²⁵ And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded supplications for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.

16: *The angel* here is not specifically the angel of death, but simply a "messenger" (the original meaning of the word *angel*) of the LORD doing the LORD's will. **17:** The people are like innocent sheep led to slaughter; David feels that the evil should fall upon him. **18-25:** *The threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite* later became the site of Solomon's temple (1 Chr.22.1; 2 Chr.3.1). The acquisition of this holy place, the building of an altar, and a sacrifice there were regarded as sufficient expiation to avert the plague from Israel (v. 25). *Fifty shekels of silver* would be worth about twenty dollars (see 1 Sam.9.8 n.).

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS

The two books of Kings, like those of Samuel, were originally one. This book, or pair of books, is a continuation of the book, or books, of Samuel, thus giving a consecutive history from the time of the Judges to the Exile (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," §§ 8-12). The literary structure of Kings, however, is somewhat different from that of Samuel, where there are two main sources with a small amount of Deuteronomic editing. The structure of Kings is more like that of the book of Judges, where various sources are collected and inserted into a Deuteronomic "framework" (see Introduction to Judges). Some of these sources are as follows: conclusion of the Early Source of Samuel (1 Kg. chs. 1-2; see end of 2 Samuel); "the Book of the Acts of Solomon" (1 Kg. 11.41); "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (mentioned in 1 Kg. 14.19 and in sixteen other places); "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (mentioned in 1 Kg. 14.29 and in fourteen other places; these books were official annals, not to be confused with the Biblical books of Chronicles); stories of Kings and prophets from both Israel and Judah, notably Jeroboam I, Ahab, Hezekiah, Elijah, and Elisha; archives of the temple, especially from the times of Solomon and Josiah.

From these and similar sources two Deuteronomic author-editors compiled the present books of Kings. The first Deuteronomist carried the story to a point either just before or just after the death of Josiah in 609 B.C. This writer judged every king on the basis of religious loyalty, with David as the standard. His theme is that national success depends on obedience to the national God, as set forth in Deuteronomy. Cardinal sins are worship in the "high places" outside of Jerusalem and idolatry. Every king of the northern kingdom (Israel) failed to meet the standard, and hence that kingdom fell because of the judgment of God as carried out by the Assyrians.

The second Deuteronomist wrote about 550 B.C., during the Babylonian Exile. By that time Judah also had fallen, and so could not be considered superior to Israel. Again national apostasy had brought divine judgment and punishment, this time at the hands of the Chaldeans. So reasoned the second Deuteronomist, who added that part of the story concerned with events after the reign of Josiah, and inserted comments of his own in earlier sections of the narrative. The interpretation as well as the history has its value; it is still true that gross national sin, and folly among leaders, will bring national ruin, even at the hands of an unjust conqueror.

First Kings begins with the enthronement of Solomon and the death of David (chs. 1-2), and recounts the reign of Solomon (chs. 3-11) and the kings of the Divided Monarchy through the reigns of Ahab of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah (chs. 12-22).

Now King David was old and advanced in years; and although they covered him with clothes, he could not get warm. ² Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young maiden be sought for my lord the king, and let her wait upon the king, and be his nurse; let her lie in your bosom, that my lord the king may be warm." ³ So they sought for a beautiful maiden

throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Ab'ishag the Shu'nammite, and brought her to the king. ⁴ The maiden was very beautiful; and she became the king's nurse and ministered to him; but the king knew her not.

⁵ Now Adoni'jah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men

1.1-53: The struggle for the succession and Solomon's attainment of the kingship. This chapter continues the Late Source of Samuel, left off at 2 Sam. 20.22. A number of years had intervened and now King David was old and advanced in years (v. 1). **3: Abishag the Shunammite**, i.e. from Shunem in the plain of Esdraelon near Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. 28.4). **4: The king knew her not**, i.e. did not have marital relations with her. **5-10: Adonijah**, as David's eldest living son (Chileab

to run before him. ⁶ His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, "Why have you done thus and so?" He was also a very handsome man; and he was born next after Ab'salom. ⁷ He conferred with Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah and with Abi'athar the priest; and they followed Adoni'jah and helped him. ⁸ But Zadok the priest, and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shim'e-i, and Re'i, and David's mighty men were not with Adoni'jah.

⁹ Adoni'jah sacrificed sheep, oxen, and fatlings by the Serpent's Stone, which is beside En-ro'gel, and he invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah, ¹⁰ but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benai'ah or the mighty men or Solomon his brother.

¹¹ Then Nathan said to Bathshe'ba the mother of Solomon, "Have you not heard that Adoni'jah the son of Haggith has become king and David our lord does not know it? ¹² Now therefore come, let me give you counsel, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. ¹³ Go in at once to King David, and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord the king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne"? Why then is Adoni'jah king?' ¹⁴ Then while you are still speaking with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."

¹⁵ So Bathshe'ba went to the king into his chamber (now the king was very old, and Ab'ishag the Shu'namite was ministering to the king). ¹⁶ Bathshe'ba bowed and did obeisance to the king, and the king said,

"What do you desire?" ¹⁷ She said to him, "My lord, you swore to your maidservant by the LORD your God, saying, 'Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.' ¹⁸ And now, behold, Adoni'jah is king, although you, my lord the king, do not know it. ¹⁹ He has sacrificed oxen, fatlings, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abi'athar the priest, and Jo'ab the commander of the army; but Solomon your servant he has not invited. ²⁰ And now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are upon you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. ²¹ Otherwise it will come to pass, when my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted offenders."

²² While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet came in. ²³ And they told the king, "Here is Nathan the prophet." And when he came in before the king, he bowed before the king, with his face to the ground. ²⁴ And Nathan said, "My lord the king, have you said, 'Adoni'jah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne'? ²⁵ For he has gone down this day, and has sacrificed oxen, fatlings, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, Jo'ab the commander^a of the army, and Abi'athar the priest; and behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and saying, 'Long live King Adoni'jah!' ²⁶ But me, your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, and your servant Solomon, he has not invited. ²⁷ Has this thing been brought about by my

^a Gk: Heb *commanders*

seems to have died young, 2 Sam.3.3-4), naturally assumed that he would succeed his father. This seems to have been taken for granted also by the older followers of David, such as *Joab* and *Abiathar* (1 Sam.22.20-23; 2 Sam.2.13). Apparently, however, there was no strict law of primogeniture at that time (compare v. 20), and hence the younger followers of David, such as *Zadok* (2 Sam.8.17), *Benaiah* (2 Sam.8.18), and *Nathan* (2 Sam.12.1) were plotting to install Solomon in spite of his disadvantage in age. The group favoring Solomon had the advantage of including David's bodyguard of mighty men. **9:** *En-rogel*, now known as Job's Well, a source of water southeast of the city, was considered a sacred place, appropriate for affairs of this kind (2 Sam.17.17). **11-27:** It is surprising to find Nathan, who once so eloquently denounced

lord the king and you have not told your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

28 Then King David answered, "Call Bathshe'ba to me." So she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. 29 And the king swore, saying, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, 30 as I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, saying, 'Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead'; even so will I do this day."

31 Then Bathshe'ba bowed with her face to the ground, and did obeisance to the king, and said, "May my lord King David live for ever!"

32 King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada." So they came before the king. 33 And the king said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon; 34 and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel; then blow the trumpet, and say, 'Long live King Solomon!' 35 You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah." 36 And Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada answered the king, "Amen! May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, say so. 37 As the LORD has been with my lord the king, even so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David."

38 So Zadok the priest, Nathan the

prophet, and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, and the Cher'ethites and the Pel'ethites, went down and caused Solomon to ride on King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. 39 There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent, and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!" 40 And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise.

41 Adoni'jah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished feasting. And when Jo'ab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, "What does this uproar in the city mean?" 42 While he was still speaking, behold, Jonathan the son of Abi'athar the priest came; and Adoni'jah said, "Come in, for you are a worthy man and bring good news." 43 Jonathan answered Adoni'jah, "No, for our lord King David has made Solomon king; 44 and the king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, and the Cher'ethites and the Pel'ethites; and they have caused him to ride on the king's mule; 45 and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise that you have heard. 46 Solomon sits upon the royal throne. 47 Moreover the king's servants came to congratulate our lord King David, saying, 'Your God make the name of Solomon more famous than yours, and make his throne greater than your throne.' And the king bowed himself upon the bed. 48 And the king also said, 'Blessed be

David for his affair with Bathsheba (2 Sam.12.1-15), now on Bathsheba's side. 28-31: Bathsheba had apparently gone out while Nathan was speaking. 32-37: When Bathsheba came back, Nathan left and hence had to be recalled. 33: *Gihon*, now called the Virgin's Fountain or Mary's Spring, is a short distance north of En-rogel (v. 9), out of sight of the latter because of a curve in the valley (Kidron) in which they lie, but well within earshot (compare v. 41). Gihon for long was the principal source of water for the city of Jerusalem (2 Chr.32.30), and hence was a place of special significance. 38-40: *Cherethites* and *Pelethites*, see 1 Sam.30.14 n.; 2 Sam.8.18; 15.18. On the ceremony of anointing, see 1 Sam.10.1 n. 41-48: *Jonathan the son of Abiathar*, see 2 Sam.15.27,36; 17.17-21. 49-53: *The horns of the altar* were projections re-

the LORD, the God of Israel, who has granted one of my offspring^b to sit on my throne this day, my own eyes seeing it.”

49 Then all the guests of Adoni'jah trembled, and rose, and each went his own way. ⁵⁰ And Adoni'jah feared Solomon; and he arose, and went, and caught hold of the horns of the altar. ⁵¹ And it was told Solomon, “Behold, Adoni'jah fears King Solomon; for, lo, he has laid hold of the horns of the altar, saying, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me first that he will not slay his servant with the sword.’” ⁵² And Solomon said, “If he prove to be a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.” ⁵³ So King Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and did obeisance to King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, “Go to your house.”

2 When David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, ² “I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man, ³ and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; ⁴ that the LORD may establish his word which he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a man on the throne of Israel.’”

5 “Moreover you know also what Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah did to me, how he dealt with the two commanders of the armies of Israel, Abner the son of Ner, and Ama'sa the son of Jether, whom he murdered, avenging^c in time of peace blood which had been shed in war, and putting innocent blood^d upon the girdle about my^e loins, and upon the sandals on my^e feet. ⁶ Act therefore according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to Sheol in peace. ⁷ But deal loyally with the sons of Barzil'lai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table; for with such loyalty they met me when I fled from Ab'salom your brother. ⁸ And there is also with you Shim'e-i the son of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahu'rim, who cursed me with a grievous curse on the day when I went to Mahana'im; but when he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD, saying, ‘I will not put you to death with the sword.’ ⁹ Now therefore hold him not guiltless, for you are a wise man; you will know what you ought to do to him, and you shall bring his gray head down with blood to Sheol.”

10 Then David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. ¹¹ And the time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ¹² So Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was firmly established.

^b Gk: Heb *one* ^c Gk: Heb *placing*
^d Gk: Heb *blood of war* ^e Gk: Heb *his*

sembling horns at the four corners of an altar (Ex.29.12; 30.10; Lev.4.7; Ps.118.27). An altar was sacred, so that a person touching it was not supposed to be slain; but the taboo was not always honored (Ex.21.14; 1 Kg.2.28–34).

2.1–46: The death of David and the elimination of men dangerous to the reign of Solomon. **1–4:** The first example in the book of the editorial work of the first Deuteronomist (see Introduction). Solomon is warned that he must follow *the law of Moses* (i.e. the Deuteronomic law) or national ruin will result. See the Introduction to Deuteronomy and compare Dt.4.40,44–45; 5.1; 11.1–17; 17.14–20. **5–9:** When *Joab* (2 Sam.3.27; 20.10) and *Shimei* (2 Sam.16.5–14; 19.18–23) committed the offenses referred to here, David was in such precarious political situations that he did not dare have these men put to death. On the friendship of Barzillai, see 2 Sam.17.27–29; 19.31–39. **13–25:** An excuse is found to eliminate Adonijah. The members of

13 Then Adoni'jah the son of Haggith came to Bathshe'ba the mother of Solomon. And she said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably." ¹⁴ Then he said, "I have something to say to you." She said, "Say on." ¹⁵ He said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel fully expected me to reign; however the kingdom has turned about and become my brother's, for it was his from the LORD. ¹⁶ And now I have one request to make of you; do not refuse me." She said to him, "Say on." ¹⁷ And he said, "Pray ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Ab'ishag the Shu'nammite as my wife." ¹⁸ Bathshe'ba said, "Very well; I will speak for you to the king."

19 So Bathshe'ba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adoni'jah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right. ²⁰ Then she said, "I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me." And the king said to her, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you." ²¹ She said, "Let Ab'ishag the Shu'nammite be given to Adoni'jah your brother as his wife." ²² King Solomon answered his mother, "And why do you ask Ab'ishag the Shu'nammite for Adoni'jah? Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is my elder brother, and on his side are Abi'athar the priest and Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah." ²³ Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, "God do so to me and more also if this word does not cost Adoni'jah his life! ²⁴ Now therefore as the LORD lives, who has established me, and placed me on the throne of David my father, and

who has made me a house, as he promised, Adoni'jah shall be put to death this day." ²⁵ So King Solomon sent Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada; and he struck him down, and he died.

26 And to Abi'athar the priest the king said, "Go to An'athoth, to your estate; for you deserve death. But I will not at this time put you to death, because you bore the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because you shared in all the affliction of my father." ²⁷ So Solomon expelled Abi'athar from being priest to the LORD, thus fulfilling the word of the LORD which he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

28 When the news came to Jo'ab—for Jo'ab had supported Adoni'jah although he had not supported Ab'salom—Jo'ab fled to the tent of the LORD and caught hold of the horns of the altar. ²⁹ And when it was told King Solomon, "Jo'ab has fled to the tent of the LORD, and behold, he is beside the altar," Solomon sent Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, saying, "Go, strike him down." ³⁰ So Benai'ah came to the tent of the LORD, and said to him, "The king commands, 'Come forth.'" But he said, "No, I will die here." Then Benai'ah brought the king word again, saying, "Thus said Jo'ab, and thus he answered me."

³¹ The king replied to him, "Do as he has said, strike him down and bury him; and thus take away from me and from my father's house the guilt for the blood which Jo'ab shed without cause."

³² The LORD will bring back his bloody deeds upon his own head, because, without the knowledge of my father David, he attacked and slew with the sword two men more righteous and better than himself, Abner the

f Gk Syr Vg: Heb and for him and for Abiathar

the king's harem were considered royal property, to be passed on to the next king (compare v. 22). *Adonijah* made himself vulnerable by his request (2 Sam.3.6–11; 16.21–22). **26–27:** Since *Abiathar* was a priest, and hence a sacrosanct personality, Solomon could not execute him. Therefore the king did what he could, banishing Abiathar to his ancestral home. Some have theorized that the banished priest composed what we now call the Early Source of Samuel (see Introduction to 1 Samuel). **27:** An editorial addition reminiscent of 1 Sam.2.27–36. **28–35:** *Solomon* had orders from *David* to do away with *Joab*, and he proceeds quickly to carry out

son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and Ama'sa the son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. ³³ So shall their blood come back upon the head of Jo'ab and upon the head of his descendants for ever; but to David, and to his descendants, and to his house, and to his throne, there shall be peace from the LORD for evermore." ³⁴ Then Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada went up, and struck him down and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. ³⁵ The king put Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada over the army in place of Jo'ab, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abi'athar.

³⁶ Then the king sent and summoned Shim'e-i, and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and do not go forth from there to any place whatever. ³⁷ For on the day you go forth, and cross the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall die; your blood shall be upon your own head." ³⁸ And Shim'e-i said to the king, "What you say is good; as my lord the king has said, so will your servant do." So Shim'e-i dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

³⁹ But it happened at the end of three years that two of Shim'e-i's slaves ran away to Achish, son of Ma'acah, king of Gath. And when it was told Shim'e-i, "Behold, your slaves are in Gath," ⁴⁰ Shim'e-i arose and saddled an ass, and went to Gath to Achish, to seek his slaves; Shim'e-i went and brought his slaves from Gath. ⁴¹ And when Solomon was told that

Shim'e-i had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and returned, ⁴² the king sent and summoned Shim'e-i, and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and solemnly admonish you, saying, 'Know for certain that on the day you go forth and go to any place whatever, you shall die'? And you said to me, 'What you say is good; I obey.' ⁴³ Why then have you not kept your oath to the LORD and the commandment with which I charged you?" ⁴⁴ The king also said to Shim'e-i, "You know in your own heart all the evil that you did to David my father; so the LORD will bring back your evil upon your own head. ⁴⁵ But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever." ⁴⁶ Then the king commanded Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died.

So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

3 Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt; he took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem. ² The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.

3 Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father; only, he sacrificed and burnt incense at the high places. ⁴ And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon used

the orders (see 1.49-53 n.). The ever ready *Benaiah* becomes the new commander. **36-46:** *Shimei* had not joined the party of Adonijah (1.8); hence *Solomon* by agreement placed him in protective custody instead of executing him. *Shimei*, however, violated the agreement, and *Benaiah* had the welcome task of performing another execution.

3.1-28: Solomon in a dream prays for wisdom, and receives it; he exercises it in judgment. A new section now begins, based on "the Book of the Acts of Solomon" (see 11.41 and Introduction). One might say that the story begins with wisdom (ch. 3), but ends with folly (ch. 11). **1-2:** The identity of the pharaoh whose daughter Solomon married is uncertain. Verse 2 is Deuteronomic and apologetic, since to worship anywhere except at the temple was contrary to the editor's principles (Dt.12.1-14). Worship at the high places (hilltop shrines) was not outlawed until the time of Josiah (2 Kg.23.8). Solomon himself worshiped at the great high place at Gibeon (v. 4). **3-15:** On the story of how Gibeon became a part of the community of Israel,

to offer a thousand burnt offerings upon that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great and steadfast love to thy servant David my father, because he walked before thee in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward thee; and thou hast kept for him this great and steadfast love, and hast given him a son to sit on his throne this day." ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And thy servant is in the midst of thy people whom thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹ Give thy servant therefore an understanding mind to govern thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to govern this thy great people?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. ¹³ I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. ¹⁴ And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

¹⁵ And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and

offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

¹⁶ Then two harlots came to the king, and stood before him. ¹⁷ The one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house. ¹⁸ Then on the third day after I was delivered, this woman also gave birth; and we were alone; there was no one else with us in the house, only we two were in the house. ¹⁹ And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on it. ²⁰ And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while your maid-servant slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead son in my bosom. ²¹ When I rose in the morning to nurse my child, behold, it was dead; but when I looked at it closely in the morning, behold, it was not the child that I had borne." ²² But the other woman said, "No, the living child is mine, and the dead child is yours." The first said, "No, the dead child is yours, and the living child is mine." Thus they spoke before the king.

²³ Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead'; and the other says, 'No; but your son is dead, and my son is the living one.'" ²⁴ And the king said, "Bring me a sword." So a sword was brought before the king. ²⁵ And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other." ²⁶ Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means slay it." But the other said, "It shall be neither mine nor yours; divide it." ²⁷ Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means slay it; she is its mother." ²⁸ And all Israel heard of the judg-

see Jos. ch. 9; compare 2 Sam. 21.2. **7:** The expression *but a little child* denotes humility; Solomon was probably about twenty years old. **14:** See v. 6. **15:** See 2 Sam. 6.17-18. **16-28:** This is the most famous of the stories of Solomon's wisdom. Solomon was at his best in matters such as this, rather than in the larger affairs of statecraft.

ment which the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to render justice.

4 King Solomon was king over all Israel, ² and these were his high officials: Azari'ah the son of Zadok was the priest; ³ Elihor'eph and Ahi'jah the sons of Shisha were secretaries; Jehosh'aphat the son of Ahi'lud was recorder; ⁴ Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada was in command of the army; Zadok and Abi'athar were priests; ⁵ Azari'ah the son of Nathan was over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan was priest and king's friend; ⁶ Ahi'shar was in charge of the palace; and Adoni'ram the son of Abda was in charge of the forced labor.

⁷ Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each man had to make provision for one month in the year. ⁸ These were their names: Ben-hur, in the hill country of E'phraim; ⁹ Ben-deker, in Makaz, Sha-al'bim, Beth-she'mesh, and E'lonbeth-ha'nan; ¹⁰ Ben-hesed, in Arub'both (to him belonged Socoh and all the land of Hephher); ¹¹ Ben-abin'adab, in all Naphath-dor (he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as his wife); ¹² Ba'ana the son of Ahi'lud, in Ta'anach, Megid'do, and all Beth-she'an which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, and from Beth-she'an to A'bel-meho'lah, as far as the other side of Jok'meam; ¹³ Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gil'ead (he had the villages of Ja'ir the son of Manas'sah, which are in Gilead, and he had the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze

bars); ¹⁴ Ahin'adab the son of Iddo, in Mahana'im; ¹⁵ Ahi'ma-az, in Naph'tali (he had taken Bas'emath the daughter of Solomon as his wife); ¹⁶ Ba'ana the son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth; ¹⁷ Jehosh'aphat the son of Paru'ah, in Is'sachar; ¹⁸ Shim'e-i the son of Ela, in Benjamin; ¹⁹ Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan. And there was one officer in the land of Judah.

²⁰ Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea; they ate and drank and were happy. ²¹ Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphra'tes to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

²² Solomon's provision for one day was thirty cors of fine flour, and sixty cors of meal, ²³ ten fat oxen, and twenty pasture-fed cattle, a hundred sheep, besides harts, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl. ²⁴ For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphra'tes from Tiphseh to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphra'tes; and he had peace on all sides round about him. ²⁵ And Judah and Israel dwelt in safety, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon. ²⁶ Solomon also had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. ²⁷ And those officers supplied provisions for King Solomon, and for all who came to King Solomon's table, each one in his month; they let nothing be lacking.

g Ch 5.1 in Heb

4.1-28: Solomon's organization of his kingdom. 1-6: This list of high officials from the court records is now somewhat disordered. *Azariah the son of Zadok* was probably not the priest (v. 2); that honor belonged to (another ?) *Zadok* (2.35) alone, *Abiathar* (v. 4) having been deposed (2.27). 7-19: Solomon's new administrative districts did not conform to the old tribal boundaries. Possibly this was one of the reasons for the revolt at the end of Solomon's reign, especially since Judah (v. 19) seems to have been exempt from the taxation mentioned in v. 7. 20-21: In the end, things turned out not to be so happy. Also, during Solomon's reign, the empire stretching from the Euphrates . . . to the border of Egypt began to fall away. Compare ch. 11. 22-28: Solomon's commerce in horses (v. 26; compare 10.26-29) may have occasioned the building of stables found in the excavations at Megiddo (9.15).

²⁸ Barley also and straw for the horses and swift steeds they brought to the place where it was required, each according to his charge.

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and largeness of mind like the sand on the seashore, ³⁰ so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ez'rahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the nations round about. ³² He also uttered three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. ³³ He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. ³⁴ And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

5^h Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father; for Hiram always loved David. ² And Solomon sent word to Hiram, ³ "You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. ⁴ But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there

is neither adversary nor misfortune. ⁵ And so I purpose to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD said to David my father, 'Your son, whom I will set upon your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.' ⁶ Now therefore command that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me; and my servants will join your servants, and I will pay you for your servants such wages as you set; for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sido'nians."

7 When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly, and said, "Blessed be the LORD this day, who has given to David a wise son to be over this great people." ⁸ And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, "I have heard the message which you have sent to me; I am ready to do all you desire in the matter of cedar and cypress timber. ⁹ My servants shall bring it down to the sea from Lebanon; and I will make it into rafts to go by sea to the place you direct, and I will have them broken up there, and you shall receive it; and you shall meet my wishes by providing food for my household." ¹⁰ So Hiram supplied Solomon with all the timber of cedar and cypress that he desired, ¹¹ while Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty thousandⁱ cors of beaten oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year. ¹² And the LORD gave Solomon wis-

^h Ch 5.15 in Heb ⁱ Gk: Heb twenty

4.29-34: Further remarks on Solomon's wisdom. In the Biblical tradition, wisdom became Solomonic, just as laws were Mosaic, and psalms Davidic (compare Pr.1.1; Ec.1.1,12). **31:** On *Ethan* and *Heman*, compare the titles of Pss. 88 and 89. **32:** On Solomon's reputation as a maker of *proverbs*, see Pr.1.1. With regard to the attribution of *songs* to Solomon, compare Pss. 72; 127; and S. of S.1.1. The number *a thousand and five* suggests *The Thousand and One Nights* of Arabic literature or the number of Solomon's wives and concubines (11.3).

5.1-18: Preparations for the building of the temple. **1-6:** On the friendship of *Hiram king of Tyre* with David, see 2 Sam.5.11-12. *The Sidonians* (v. 6), a term used here for all the people later called Phoenicians. From their two chief cities, Tyre and Sidon, they carried on a vast maritime enterprise, two of their chief articles of commerce being cedar wood and purple dye. About a century after the time of Solomon they established their most famous colony, Carthage in North Africa. **11:** *Twenty thousand cors of wheat*, estimated to equal 125,000 bushels; *twenty thousand cors of liquid* would equal over a million gallons, according to some computations. *Beaten oil*, oil extracted from olives by beating, considered the best method for quality produc-

dom, as he promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and the two of them made a treaty.

13 King Solomon raised a levy of forced labor out of all Israel; and the levy numbered thirty thousand men.

14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in relays; they would be a month in Lebanon and two months at home; Adoni'ram was in charge of the levy. 15 Solomon also had seventy thousand burden-bearers and eighty thousand hewers of stone in the hill country, 16 besides Solomon's three thousand three hundred chief officers who were over the work, who had charge of the people who carried on the work. 17 At the king's command, they quarried out great, costly stones in order to lay the foundation of the house with dressed stones. 18 So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the men of Gebal did the hewing and prepared the timber and the stone to build the house.

6 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD. 2 The house which King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. 3 The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits long, equal to the width of the house, and ten cubits deep in front of the house. 4 And

he made for the house windows with recessed frames. 5 He also built a structure against the wall of the house, running round the walls of the house, both the nave and the inner sanctuary; and he made side chambers all around. 6 The lowest story^j was five cubits broad, the middle one was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad; for around the outside of the house he made offsets on the wall in order that the supporting beams should not be inserted into the walls of the house.

7 When the house was built, it was with stone prepared at the quarry; so that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the temple, while it was being built.

8 The entrance for the lowest^k story was on the south side of the house; and one went up by stairs to the middle story, and from the middle story to the third. 9 So he built the house, and finished it; and he made the ceiling of the house of beams and planks of cedar. 10 He built the structure against the whole house, each story^l five cubits high, and it was joined to the house with timbers of cedar.

11 Now the word of the LORD came to Solomon, 12 "Concerning this house which you are building, if you will walk in my statutes and obey my ordinances and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you, which I

^j Gk: Heb structure

^k Gk Tg: Heb middle

^l Heb lacks each story

tion. 13-18: One of the causes of the later disruption of the kingdom was forced labor (12.4). Adoniram, also called Adoram and Hadoram (2 Sam.20.24; 2 Chr.10.18); compare 4.6; 12.18. Gebal, called Byblos by the Greeks, famous for its trade in Egyptian papyrus, the ancient form of paper.

6.1-38: The building of the temple. 1: An editorial expansion of v. 37. The fourth year of Solomon's reign would be approximately 960 B.C. The four hundred and eightieth year before this (1440 B.C.) is now considered too early as a date for the Exodus. The month of Ziv came in the spring (April-May). 2-6: The cubit, approximately eighteen inches. Thus the temple had a rectangular floor plan of about 90 X 30 ft., and was about 45 ft. high. There were three rooms: the vestibule or entrance hall, about 30 ft. wide and 10 ft. deep; the nave or main room, about 60 ft. long (v. 17); and the inner sanctuary or holy of holies, a perfect cube of about 30 ft. (v. 20). Side chambers surrounded the nave and the inner sanctuary, but not the vestibule. 7: There is no reason to doubt that the stone was prepared at the quarry, though a later editor has exaggerated the silence of the building operations. 8-10: A further description of the side chambers.

spoke to David your father. ¹³ And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel."

¹⁴ So Solomon built the house, and finished it. ¹⁵ He lined the walls of the house on the inside with boards of cedar; from the floor of the house to the rafters^m of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the house with boards of cypress. ¹⁶ He built twenty cubits of the rear of the house with boards of cedar from the floor to the rafters,^m and he built this within as an inner sanctuary, as the most holy place. ¹⁷ The house, that is, the nave in front of the inner sanctuary, was forty cubits long. ¹⁸ The cedar within the house was carved in the form of gourds and open flowers; all was cedar, no stone was seen. ¹⁹ The inner sanctuary he prepared in the innermost part of the house, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. ²⁰ The inner sanctuaryⁿ was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high; and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also made^o an altar of cedar. ²¹ And Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, and he drew chains of gold across, in front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. ²² And he overlaid the whole house with gold, until all the house was finished. Also the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold.

²³ In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of Olivewood, each ten cubits high. ²⁴ Five cubits was the length of one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the length of the other wing of the cherub; it was ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. ²⁵ The other cherub also measured ten cubits, both cherubim had the same measure and the same form. ²⁶ The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was that of the other cherub.

²⁷ He put the cherubim in the innermost part of the house; and the wings of the cherubim were spread out so that a wing of one touched the one wall, and a wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; their other wings touched each other in the middle of the house. ²⁸ And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

²⁹ He carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, in the inner and outer rooms. ³⁰ The floor of the house he overlaid with gold in the inner and outer rooms.

³¹ For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors of Olivewood; the lintel and the doorposts formed a pentagon.^p ³² He covered the two doors of Olivewood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers; he overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubim and upon the palm trees.

³³ So also he made for the entrance to the nave doorposts of Olivewood, in the form of a square, ³⁴ and two doors of cypress wood; the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. ³⁵ On them he carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and he overlaid them with gold evenly applied upon the carved work. ³⁶ He built the inner court with three courses of hewn stone and one course of cedar beams.

³⁷ In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv. ³⁸ And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications. He was seven years in building it.

^m Gk: Heb walls

ⁿ Vg: Heb and before the inner sanctuary

^o Gk: Heb covered

^p Heb obscure

14-22: No doubt the decorations of the temple were artistically intricate; the amount of gold, however, has probably been somewhat exaggerated. On the ark of the covenant, see 1 Sam.3.3 n. **23-28:** On the cherubim, see 1 Sam.4.4 n. **37-38:** See v. 1 n. The month of Bul was in the autumn (October-November).

7 Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished his entire house.

2 He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon; its length was a hundred cubits, and its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, and it was built upon three^q rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.³ And it was covered with cedar above the chambers that were upon the forty-five pillars, fifteen in each row.⁴ There were window frames in three rows, and window opposite window in three tiers.⁵ All the doorways and windows^r had square frames, and window was opposite window in three tiers.

6 And he made the Hall of Pillars; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth thirty cubits; there was a porch in front with pillars, and a canopy before them.

7 And he made the Hall of the Throne where he was to pronounce judgment, even the Hall of Judgment; it was finished with cedar from floor to rafters.^s

8 His own house where he was to dwell, in the other court back of the hall, was of like workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter whom he had taken in marriage.

9 All these were made of costly stones, hewn according to measure, sawed with saws, back and front, even from the foundation to the coping, and from the court of the house of the LORD^t to the great court.¹⁰ The foundation was of costly stones, huge stones, stones of eight and ten cubits.

¹¹ And above were costly stones, hewn according to measurement, and cedar.¹² The great court had three courses of hewn stone round about,

and a course of cedar beams; so had the inner court of the house of the LORD, and the vestibule of the house.

13 And King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre.¹⁴ He was the son of a widow of the tribe of Naph'tali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze; and he was full of wisdom, understanding, and skill, for making any work in bronze. He came to King Solomon, and did all his work.

15 He cast two pillars of bronze. Eighteen cubits was the height of one pillar, and a line of twelve cubits measured its circumference; it was hollow, and its thickness was four fingers; the second pillar was the same.^u ¹⁶ He also made two capitals of molten bronze, to set upon the tops of the pillars; the height of the one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other capital was five cubits.

¹⁷ Then he made two^v nets of checker work with wreaths of chain work for the capitals upon the tops of the pillars; a net^w for the one capital, and a net^w for the other capital.¹⁸ Likewise he made pomegranates;^x in two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the capital that was upon the top of the pillar; and he did the same with the other capital.¹⁹ Now the capitals that were upon the tops of the pillars in the vestibule were of lily-work, four cubits.²⁰ The capitals were upon the two pillars and also above the rounded projection which was beside the network; there were two hundred pomegranates, in two

^q Gk: Heb four ^r Gk: Heb posts

^s Syr Vg: Heb floor

^t With 7.12: Heb from the outside

^u Tg Syr Compare Gk and Jer 52.21: Heb and a line of twelve cubits measured the circumference of the second pillar

^v Gk: Heb lacks he made two ^w Gk: Heb seven

^x With 2 Mss Compare Gk: Heb pillars

7.1-51: Details of Solomon's building operations. 1: See 3.1. The palace and administrative complex took *thirteen years* to build, the temple only seven (6.38); compare 9.10. 6-12: Details of the palace and administrative complex lying immediately south of the temple. 13-14: The artisan *Hiram of Tyre* is not to be confused with the king of the same name; compare 2 Chr. 2.13, where the name is given as Hiram-abi. 15-22: In front of the vestibule were set up the two great free-standing *pillars of bronze* called *Jachin* and *Boaz*. The names mean something like "God establishes" and "He comes with power." The pillars themselves doubtless had a symbolic significance (e.g. "trees of life") which now eludes us. On their role at ceremonial occasions,

rows round about; and so with the other capital. ²¹ He set up the pillars at the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the south and called its name Jachin; and he set up the pillar on the north and called its name Bo'az. ²² And upon the tops of the pillars was lily-work. Thus the work of the pillars was finished.

²³ Then he made the molten sea; it was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. ²⁴ Under its brim were gourds, for thirty cubits, compassing the sea round about; the gourds were in two rows, cast with it when it was cast. ²⁵ It stood upon twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east; the sea was set upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. ²⁶ Its thickness was a handbreadth; and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily; it held two thousand baths.

²⁷ He also made the ten stands of bronze; each stand was four cubits long, four cubits wide, and three cubits high. ²⁸ This was the construction of the stands: they had panels, and the panels were set in the frames ²⁹ and on the panels that were set in the frames were lions, oxen, and cherubim. Upon the frames, both above and below the lions and oxen, there were wreaths of beveled work. ³⁰ Moreover each stand had four bronze wheels and axles of bronze; and at the four corners were supports for a laver. The supports were cast, with wreaths at the side of each. ³¹ Its opening was within a crown which projected upward one cubit; its opening was round, as a

pedestal is made, a cubit and a half deep. At its opening there were carvings; and its panels were square, not round. ³² And the four wheels were underneath the panels; the axles of the wheels were of one piece with the stands; and the height of a wheel was a cubit and a half. ³³ The wheels were made like a chariot wheel; their axles, their rims, their spokes, and their hubs, were all cast. ³⁴ There were four supports at the four corners of each stand; the supports were of one piece with the stands. ³⁵ And on the top of the stand there was a round band half a cubit high; and on the top of the stand its stays and its panels were of one piece with it. ³⁶ And on the surfaces of its stays and on its panels, he carved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, according to the space of each, with wreaths round about. ³⁷ After this manner he made the ten stands; all of them were cast alike, of the same measure and the same form.

³⁸ And he made ten lavers of bronze; each laver held forty baths, each laver measured four cubits, and there was a laver for each of the ten stands. ³⁹ And he set the stands, five on the south side of the house, and five on the north side of the house; and he set the sea on the southeast corner of the house.

⁴⁰ Hiram also made the pots, the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram finished all the work that he did for King Solomon on the house of the LORD: ⁴¹ the two pillars, the two bowls of the capitals that were on the tops of the pillars, and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the tops of the
y Heb ten

see 2 Kg.11.14; 23.3. **23-26:** *The molten sea* was a huge bowl or tank supported on *twelve oxen*. Its capacity was *two thousand baths* (the bath was a liquid measure equal to about six gallons). According to 2 Chr.4.6 the purpose was *for the priests to wash in*, though it is difficult to imagine just how the ablutions were accomplished, since the rim of the tank was some ten feet above the pavement. As with the pillars, there may have been also a symbolic significance (such as "life-giving water"); compare the artificial lakes near Egyptian temples). The *twelve oxen* were really couchant bulls, symbols of fertility and power in many religions of the ancient Near East. Their arrangement according to the four points of the compass suggested universal dominion.

27-39: *The ten stands*, highly ornamented bronze wagons on each of which was mounted

pillars; ⁴² and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were upon the pillars; ⁴³ the ten stands, and the ten lavers upon the stands; ⁴⁴ and the one sea, and the twelve oxen underneath the sea.

⁴⁵ Now the pots, the shovels, and the basins, all these vessels in the house of the LORD, which Hiram made for King Solomon, were of burnished bronze. ⁴⁶ In the plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan. ⁴⁷ And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because there were so many of them; the weight of the bronze was not found out.

⁴⁸ So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the LORD: the golden altar, the golden table for the bread of the Presence, ⁴⁹ the lampstands of pure gold, five on the south side and five on the north, before the inner sanctuary; the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs, of gold; ⁵⁰ The cups, snuffers, basins, dishes for incense, and firepans, of pure gold; and the sockets of gold, for the doors of the innermost part of the house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the nave of the temple.

⁵¹ Thus all the work that King Solomon did on the house of the LORD was finished. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, the silver, the gold, and the vessels, and stored them in the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

8 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. ² And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Eth'anim, which is the seventh month. ³ And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴ And they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up. ⁵ And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. ⁶ Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. ⁸ And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place before the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside; and they are there to this day. ⁹ There was nothing in the ark except the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

one of the *ten lavers* or wash basins. **48-50:** In the nave were the golden altar for incense, the table for the bread of the Presence (or showbread, see Lev.24.5-9), and the ten lampstands, plus smaller objects. The lampstands were simple, each being a rod resting on a base, with a small bowl at the top for oil and wick; not to be confused with the lampstand described in Ex.25.31-40.

8.1-66: The dedication of the temple. 1-11: Bringing the ark of the covenant into the temple (2 Sam.6.12-15). The city of David, or Zion, was south of the temple area, in the southeastern part of the city. The month Ethanim or Tishri occurred in the autumn (September-October). The dedication of the temple was, therefore, postponed for eleven months (6.38), in order to make it a part of the autumnal new-year festival, the religious high point of the year. **7:** The cherubim, see 6.23-28. The ark was carried by the poles (v. 8); the writer here is the first Deuteronomist (see Introduction), of a time before the destruction of the temple, as is seen from the

¹⁰ And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

¹² Then Solomon said,

"The LORD has set the sun in the heavens,

but^z has said that he would dwell in thick darkness.

¹³ I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever."

¹⁴ Then the king faced about, and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood.

¹⁵ And he said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying,

¹⁶ 'Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city in all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.' ¹⁷ Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁸ But the LORD said to David my father, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart; ¹⁹ nevertheless you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.' ²⁰ Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise which he made; for I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹ And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt."

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; ²³ and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to thy servants who walk before thee with all their heart; ²⁴ who hast kept with thy servant David my father what thou didst declare to him; yea, thou didst speak with thy mouth, and with thy hand hast fulfilled it this day.

²⁵ Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father what thou hast promised him, saying, 'There shall never fail you a man before me to sit upon the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.' ²⁶ Now therefore, O God of Israel, let thy word be confirmed, which thou hast spoken to thy servant David my father.

²⁷ "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! ²⁸ Yet have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O LORD my God, hearkening to the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prays before thee this day; ²⁹ that thy eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which thou hast said, 'My name shall be there,' that thou mayest hearken to the prayer which thy servant offers toward this place. ³⁰ And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place; and when thou hearest, forgive.

³¹ "If a man sins against his neigh-

^z Gk: Heb lacks *has set the sun in the heavens, but*

words *they are there to this day*. **12-21:** Solomon's address to the people. The writer here is the first Deuteronomist; it is impossible to tell how much of this comes from Solomon and how much from the later writer. The *thick darkness* (v. 12) refers to the fact that the inner sanctuary had no windows, being in total darkness except when the door was opened on rare occasions. According to the Greek version, the poetic prologue (vv. 12-13) was taken from the Book of Jashar (see Jos.10.13 n.). **22-40:** Solomon's prayer of dedication. This prayer, entirely in the

bor and is made to take an oath, and comes and swears his oath before thine altar in this house, ³² then hear thou in heaven, and act, and judge thy servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct upon his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

³³ "When thy people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against thee, if they turn again to thee, and acknowledge thy name, and pray and make supplication to thee in this house; ³⁴ then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again to the land which thou gavest to their fathers.

³⁵ "When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against thee, if they pray toward this place, and acknowledge thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them, ³⁶ then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, thy people Israel, when thou dost teach them the good way in which they should walk; and grant rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people as an inheritance.

³⁷ "If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar; if their enemy besieges them in any^a of their cities; whatever plague, whatever sickness there is; ³⁸ whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by any man or by all thy people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house; ³⁹ then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and render to each whose heart thou knowest, according to all his ways (for thou, thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men); ⁴⁰ that they may fear thee all the days

that they live in the land which thou gavest to our fathers.

⁴¹ "Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of thy people Israel, comes from a far country for thy name's sake ⁴² (for they shall hear of thy great name, and thy mighty hand, and of thy outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, ⁴³ hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to thee; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

⁴⁴ "If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way thou shalt send them, and they pray to the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen and the house which I have built for thy name, ⁴⁵ then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

⁴⁶ "If they sin against thee—for there is no man who does not sin—and thou art angry with them, and dost give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; ⁴⁷ yet if they lay it to heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to thee in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned, and have acted perversely and wickedly'; ⁴⁸ if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to thee toward their land, which thou gavest to their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; ⁴⁹ then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause ⁵⁰ and forgive thy people who have

^a Gk Syr: Heb *the land*

spirit of the book of Deuteronomy, was composed mostly by the first Deuteronomist. The phrase *and bring them again to the land which thou gavest to their fathers* (v. 34) was added during the Exile, probably by the second Deuteronomist. **41-53:** An expansion of the prayer by the second Deuteronomist. The many references to being *carried away captive to the land*

sinned against thee, and all their transgressions which they have committed against thee; and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them ⁵¹ (for they are thy people, and thy heritage, which thou didst bring out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace). ⁵² Let thy eyes be open to the supplication of thy servant, and to the supplication of thy people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to thee. ⁵³ For thou didst separate them from among all the peoples of the earth, to be thy heritage, as thou didst declare through Moses, thy servant, when thou didst bring our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God."

⁵⁴ Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven; ⁵⁵ and he stood, and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying, ⁵⁶ "Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised; not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he uttered by Moses his servant. ⁵⁷ The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers; may he not leave us or forsake us; ⁵⁸ that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his ordinances, which he commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹ Let these words of mine, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires; ⁶⁰ that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other. ⁶¹ Let your heart therefore be wholly

true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day."

⁶² Then the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. ⁶³ Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. ⁶⁴ The same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD; for there he offered the burnt offering and the cereal offering and the fat pieces of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that was before the LORD was too small to receive the burnt offering and the cereal offering and the fat pieces of the peace offerings.

⁶⁵ So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days. ⁶⁶ On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David his servant and to Israel his people.

9 When Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house and all that Solomon desired to build, ² the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ And the LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before me; I have consecrated this house which you have built, and put my name there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time. ⁴ And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and

b Gk: Heb seven days and seven days, fourteen days

of the enemy, especially in vv. 46-53, should be noticed. **62-66:** This is the natural conclusion of the chapter by the first Deuteronomist. In v. 64 *the bronze altar* in front of the temple is specifically mentioned for the first time, though it is alluded to in vv. 22 and 54.

9.1-9: Solomon's vision. A thoroughly Deuteronomistic composition, probably by the second Deuteronomist, who lived after the temple had *become a heap of ruins* (v. 8), and could point out the sinfulness that had led to national ruin (see Introduction).

uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, ⁵ then I will establish your royal throne over Israel for ever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'There shall not fail you a man upon the throne of Israel.' ⁶ But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and the house which I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight; and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ And this house will become a heap of ruins; every one passing by it will be astonished, and will hiss; and they will say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' ⁹ Then they will say, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this evil upon them.' "

10 At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house, ¹¹ and Hiram king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress timber and gold, as much as he desired, King Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. ¹² But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, they did not please him. ¹³ Therefore he said, "What kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother?" So they are called the land of Cabul to this day. ¹⁴ Hiram

had sent to the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

15 And this is the account of the forced labor which King Solomon levied to build the house of the LORD and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megid'o and Gezer ¹⁶ (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and captured Gezer and burnt it with fire, and had slain the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife; ¹⁷ so Solomon rebuilt Gezer) and Lower Beth-hor'on ¹⁸ and Ba'alath and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, ¹⁹ and all the store-cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. ²⁰ All the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, who were not of the people of Israel— ²¹ their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to destroy utterly—these Solomon made a forced levy of slaves, and so they are to this day. ²² But of the people of Israel Solomon made no slaves; they were the soldiers, they were his officials, his commanders, his captains, his chariot commanders and his horsemen.

23 These were the chief officers who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who had charge of the people who carried on the work.

24 But Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house which Solomon had built for her; then he built the Millo.

c Syr Old Latin: Heb *high* d Heb lacks of Judah

9.10-14: An interlude; a story told to explain the origin of a name. The meaning of *Cabul* is not known; "like nothing" is as good a conjecture as any. On the historical side, Hiram's supplying of timber is irrelevant; Solomon had paid for that (5.11). It would seem that Solomon was in financial difficulties and was forced to cede *twenty cities* to Hiram for a cash consideration (the value of a gold talent has been roughly estimated at thirty thousand dollars).

9.15-22: The forced levy (see 5.13). The *Millo* (also v. 24; 2 Sam.5.9) is usually interpreted as an earthwork south of the temple area; the word probably means "a filling." Verse 22 seems to be contradicted by 5.13 and 12.4. 23-28: Miscellaneous details. 24: Compare v. 16 and 3.1.

25 Three times a year Solomon used to offer up burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built to the LORD, burning incense^e before the LORD. So he finished the house.

26 King Solomon built a fleet of ships at E'zion-ge'ber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.²⁷ And Hiram sent with the fleet his servants, seamen who were familiar with the sea, together with the servants of Solomon;²⁸ and they went to Ophir, and brought from there gold, to the amount of four hundred and twenty talents; and they brought it to King Solomon.

10 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.² She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind.³ And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he could not explain to her.⁴ And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built,⁵ the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings which he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, "The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your

wisdom,⁷ but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard.⁸ Happy are your wives! Happy are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹ Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel for ever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness."¹⁰ Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones; never again came such an abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11 Moreover the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones.¹² And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, lyres also and harps for the singers; no such almug wood has come or been seen, to this day.

13 And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land, with her servants.

14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six

^e Gk: Heb burning incense with it which
^f Gk Syr: Heb men

25: In those early days the king still exercised priestly functions. **26-28:** *Red Sea* here refers to the Gulf of Aqabah. The location of *Ophir* is unknown; it may have been in southern Arabia (compare 10.11 and Gen.10.29). Excavations at Ezion-geber have disclosed the refineries in which copper from the Arabah mines was smelted.

10.1-29: The visit of the queen of Sheba; Solomon's wealth and business enterprises. **1-5:** *Sheba* is usually considered to have been located in southwest Arabia, modern Yemen. Some, however, think that this queen came from a colony of Sheba in northern Arabia, where a number of queens are known to have ruled. Practical wisdom, proverbial sayings, and contests of wits were characteristic of the Biblical world; compare 4.29-34 and the Old Testament books of "wisdom," such as Job and Proverbs. The word for *spirit* (v. 5) can be translated "breath"—the queen was breathless with amazement. **10:** On the value of *talents of gold*, see 9.14 n. **11-12:** An interlude, related to 9.26-28. *Almug wood* is now often called sandalwood. **13:** The Ethiopians (Abyssinians) have a tradition according to which *all that she desired* included an heir, who later became king of Ethiopia, thus establishing the true dynasty of David for that country.

hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, ¹⁵ besides that which came from the traders and from the traffic of the merchants, and from all the kings of Arabia and from the governors of the land. ¹⁶ King Solomon made two hundred large shields of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. ¹⁷ And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three minas of gold went into each shield; and the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. ¹⁸ The king also made a great ivory throne, and overlaid it with the finest gold. ¹⁹ The throne had six steps, and at the back of the throne was a calf's head, and on each side of the seat were arm rests and two lions standing beside the arm rests, ²⁰ while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom. ²¹ All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver, it was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. ²² For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.^g

²³ Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. ²⁴ And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. ²⁵ Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.

²⁶ And Solomon gathered together

chariots and horsemen; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. ²⁷ And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephe'lah. ²⁸ And Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Ku'e, and the king's traders received them from Ku'e at a price. ²⁹ A chariot could be imported from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; and so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

|| Now King Solomon loved many foreign women: the daughter of Pharaoh, and Moabite, Ammonite, E'domite, Sido'nian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods"; Solomon clung to these in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ash'toreth the goddess of the Sido'nians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. ⁷ Then Solo-

^g Or baboons

16-17: If there were fifty shekels in a mina (Ezek.45.12), the smaller shields weighed one hundred and fifty shekels. **22:** *Ships of Tarshish*, i.e. ships capable of making long voyages; compare vv. 11-12; 9.26-28; Is.23.1. **26-29:** These verses describe Solomon's very large commerce in horses and chariots. Kue was Cilicia, in southeast Asia Minor. The kings of the Hittites ruled small principalities in northern Syria.

11.1-43: The dark side of Solomon's reign. The second Deuteronomist, who was less friendly to Judah, may have contributed heavily to this chapter. In any case, the writers knew the tragedies that followed (vv. 12-13) and sought to probe their causes. In this connection, Dt. 17.14-20, from the same school of writers, should be carefully considered. **1-13:** Judgment on Solomon. Compare Dt.7.1-4. On *Ashtoreth*, see 1 Sam.7.3-4 n. On the *high place*, see 3.1-2 n.

mon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem.⁸ And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,¹⁰ and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD commanded.¹¹ Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.¹² Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.¹³ However I will not tear away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

14 And the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the E'domite; he was of the royal house in Edom.¹⁵ For when David was in Edom, and Jo'ab the commander of the army went up to bury the slain, he slew every male in Edom¹⁶ (for Jo'ab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom);¹⁷ but Hadad fled to Egypt, together with certain E'domites of his father's servants, Hadad being yet a little child.¹⁸ They set out from Mid'ian and came to Paran, and took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who

gave him a house, and assigned him an allowance of food, and gave him land.¹⁹ And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tah'penes the queen.²⁰ And the sister of Tah'penes bore him Genu'bath his son, whom Tah'penes weaned in Pharaoh's house; and Genu'bath was in Pharaoh's house among the sons of Pharaoh.²¹ But when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers and that Jo'ab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, that I may go to my own country."²² But Pharaoh said to him, "What have you lacked with me that you are now seeking to go to your own country?" And he said to him, "Only let me go."

23 God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eli'ada, who had fled from his master Hadade'zer king of Zobah.²⁴ And he gathered men about him and became leader of a marauding band, after the slaughter by David; and they went to Damascus, and dwelt there, and made him king in Damascus.²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, doing mischief as Hadad did; and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

26 Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, an E'phraimite of Zer'edah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeru'ah, a widow, also lifted up his hand against the king.²⁷ And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king. Solomon built the Millo, and closed up the breach of the city of David his father.²⁸ The man Jerobo'am was very able, and when Solomon saw that the young man was

14-40: Adversaries of Solomon. 14-22: Hadad the Edomite. 15: *David had conquered Edom (every male is of course an exaggeration). Near the beginning of Solomon's reign (v. 21), Hadad the Edomite revolted rather successfully (v. 25).* 23-25: Rezon of Syria. On David's conquest of *Hadadezer king of Zobah* and of the Syrians (Arameans) of *Damascus*; see 2 Sam. 8.3-6; 10.15-19. *Rezon* set up a new kingdom in *Damascus* and defied Solomon. Thus the empire of *David* began to melt away under Solomon. 26-40: Jeroboam of Israel. The greatest danger, namely internal revolt, came from *Jeroboam the son of Nebat*. The prophet *Ahijah the Shilonite* (of Shiloh) expected that *Jeroboam* would be more loyal to the God of Israel than

industrious he gave him charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. ²⁹ And at that time, when Jerobo'am went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahi'jah the Shi'lonite found him on the road. Now Ahi'jah had clad himself with a new garment; and the two of them were alone in the open country. ³⁰ Then Ahi'jah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹ And he said to Jerobo'am, "Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes' ³² (but he shall have one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), ³³ because he has^h forsaken me, and worshiped Ash'toreth the goddess of the Sido'nians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and has^h not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, as David his father did. ³⁴ Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand; but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of David my servant whom I chose, who kept my commandments and my statutes; ³⁵ but I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it to you, ten tribes. ³⁶ Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. ³⁷ And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. ³⁸ And if you will hearken to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my

eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. ³⁹ And I will for this afflict the descendants of David, but not for ever.' " ⁴⁰ Solomon sought therefore to kill Jerobo'am; but Jerobo'am arose, and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

⁴¹ Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? ⁴² And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. ⁴³ And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father; and Rehobo'am his son reigned in his stead.

12 Rehobo'am went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. ² And when Jerobo'am the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, whither he had fled from King Solomon), then Jerobo'am returned fromⁱ Egypt. ³ And they sent and called him; and Jerobo'am and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehobo'am, ⁴ "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke upon us, and we will serve you." ⁵ He said to them, "Depart for three days, then come again to me." So the people went away.

⁶ Then King Rehobo'am took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?" ⁷ And they said to him, "If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them,

^h Gk Syr Vg: Heb they have

ⁱ Gk Vg Compare 2 Chr 10.2: Heb dwelt in

Solomon had been. *The lamp* (v. 36) was a symbol of the permanence of the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam.21.17). *Shishak king of Egypt* was probably the less friendly successor of the Pharaoh whose daughter was married to Solomon (3.1). **41-43**: Conclusion. On *the book of the acts of Solomon*, see the Introduction. The figure *forty years* is an approximation; compare the same figure for David in 2.11.

12.1-33: *The kingdom divided*; *Jeroboam's idolatry*. **1-5**: *Shechem* was at that time the chief town of the northern tribes (Jos.24.1,32), where *Rehoboam* needed to be confirmed as *king* in

and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants for ever.”⁸ But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him.⁹ And he said to them, “What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, ‘Lighten the yoke that your father put upon us?’”¹⁰ And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, “Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but do you lighten it for us’; thus shall you say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins.’”¹¹ And now, whereas my father laid upon you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”

12 So Jerobo’am and all the people came to Rehobo’am the third day, as the king said, “Come to me again the third day.”¹³ And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel which the old men had given him,¹⁴ he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”¹⁵ So the king did not hearken to the people; for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfil his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahi’jah the Shi’lonite to Jerobo’am the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king did not hearken to them, the people answered the king,

“What portion have we in David?

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

To your tents, O Israel!

Look now to your own house, David.”

So Israel departed to their tents.¹⁷ But Rehobo’am reigned over the people of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.¹⁸ Then King Rehobo’am sent Ador’am, who was taskmaster over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehobo’am made haste to mount his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.²⁰ And when all Israel heard that Jerobo’am had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

21 When Rehobo’am came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, and the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehobo’am the son of Solomon.²² But the word of God came to Shemai’ah the man of God:²³ “Say to Rehobo’am the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people,²⁴ ‘Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your kinsmen the people of Israel. Return every man to his home, for this thing is from me.’” So they hearkened to the word of the LORD, and went home again, according to the word of the LORD.

25 Then Jerobo’am built Shechem

order to hold the allegiance of these tribes. 11: The word *scorpions* designates here stinging whips, much more cruel than ordinary whips. 12-15: Rehoboam takes the tragically wrong advice of the young men. The reason for the attitude of the writer in v. 15 is given in 11.33. 16: On the readiness of the northern tribes to withdraw from Judah, compare 2 Sam.20.1, where even the wording is similar. 17-20: Certain Israelites remained in Judah; and when Rehoboam attempted to enforce his oppressive policy in the north, Jeroboam was promptly made king over all Israel. Judah only remained under Rehoboam. 21-24: According to these verses, the prophetic party of Judah, represented by Shemaiah, favored the division, hoping that the north would be more loyal to the LORD (see 11.26-40 n.). Benjamin in vv. 21,23 is editorial, to support the idea that there were exactly ten tribes in the north and two in the south. Actually, Benjamin may

in the hill country of E'phraim, and dwelt there; and he went out from there and built Penu'el. ²⁶ And Jerobo'am said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David; ²⁷ if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehobo'am king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehobo'am king of Judah." ²⁸ So the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." ²⁹ And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ And this thing became a sin, for the people went to the one at Bethel and to the other as far as Dan. ³¹ He also made houses on high places, and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. ³² And Jerobo'am appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices upon the altar; so he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. ³³ He went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the people of Israel, and went up to the altar to burn incense.

13 And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jerobo'am was standing by the altar to burn incense. ² And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josi'ah by name; and he shall sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places who burn incense upon you, and men's bones shall be burned upon you.'" ³ And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: 'Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.'" ⁴ And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jerobo'am stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Lay hold of him." And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. ⁵ The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. ⁶ And the king said to the man of God, "Entreat now the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." And the man of God entreated the LORD; and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as it was before. ⁷ And the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." ⁸ And the man of God said to

J Gk: Heb went to the one as far as Dan

have been split in the division. **25-33:** *Jeroboam* straightway led his people into worse apostasy than that of the south. *Jeroboam* intended the *two calves of gold* (really bulls) to represent the LORD (*gods* in v. 28 should probably be "God"); according to the Deuteronomic writer, this was very wrong, since the bull was also the symbol of Baal, and all images were forbidden (see 7.23-26 n.; Dt.5.8-9). *Jeroboam* also had a political purpose in attempting to keep his people from going to Jerusalem.

13.1-34: *The prophets turn against Jeroboam.* This chapter continues the condemnation of *Jeroboam* begun in ch. 12. To *eat bread or drink water* (vv. 9,22) in Israel would have implied approval of what was happening there. There are two definite indications of date in the story: the territory of Israel was not called *Samaria* (v. 32) until after that kingdom fell in 721 B.C. (2 Kg.17.24); *Josiah* (v. 2) died in 609 B.C., near the time when the first Deuteronomist wrote (see Introduction). The writer of about 600 B.C. is trying to evaluate the conditions existing about three hundred years before his time.

the king, "If you give me half your house, I will not go in with you. And I will not eat bread or drink water in this place; ⁹ for so was it commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall neither eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way that you came.'" ¹⁰ So he went another way, and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel.

11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel. And his sons^k came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; the words also which he had spoken to the king, they told to their father. ¹² And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him the way which the man of God who came from Judah had gone. ¹³ And he said to his sons, "Saddle the ass for me." So they saddled the ass for him and he mounted it. ¹⁴ And he went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak; and he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am." ¹⁵ Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread." ¹⁶ And he said, "I may not return with you, or go in with you; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place; ¹⁷ for it was said to me by the word of the LORD, 'You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.'" ¹⁸ And he said to him, "I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied to him. ¹⁹ So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

20 And as they sat at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; ²¹ and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, ²² but have come

back, and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, 'Eat no bread, and drink no water'; your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'" ²³ And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the ass for the prophet whom he had brought back. ²⁴ And as he went away a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his body was thrown in the road, and the ass stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body. ²⁵ And behold, men passed by, and saw the body thrown in the road, and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

26 And when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God, who disobeyed the word of the LORD; therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and slain him, according to the word which the LORD spoke to him." ²⁷ And he said to his sons, "Saddle the ass for me." And they saddled it. ²⁸ And he went and found his body thrown in the road, and the ass and the lion standing beside the body. The lion had not eaten the body or torn the ass. ²⁹ And the prophet took up the body of the man of God and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back to the city, ¹ to mourn and to bury him. ³⁰ And he laid the body in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!" ³¹ And after he had buried him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones." ³² For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Sama'ria, shall surely come to pass."

33 After this thing Jerobo'am did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people; any who

^k Gk Syr Vg: Heb son

¹ Gk: Heb he came to the city of the old prophet

would, he consecrated to be priests of the high places. ³⁴ And this thing became sin to the house of Jerobo'am, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

14 At that time Abi'jah the son of Jerobo'am fell sick. ² And Jerobo'am said to his wife, "Arise, and disguise yourself, that it be not known that you are the wife of Jerobo'am, and go to Shiloh; behold, Ahi'jah the prophet is there, who said of me that I should be king over this people. ³ Take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what shall happen to the child."

⁴ Jerobo'am's wife did so; she arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahi'jah. Now Ahi'jah could not see, for his eyes were dim because of his age. ⁵ And the LORD said to Ahi'jah, "Behold, the wife of Jerobo'am is coming to inquire of you concerning her son; for he is sick. Thus and thus shall you say to her."

When she came, she pretended to be another woman. ⁶ But when Ahi'jah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jerobo'am; why do you pretend to be another? For I am charged with heavy tidings for you. ⁷ Go, tell Jerobo'am, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: "Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you leader over my people Israel, ⁸ and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you; and yet you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments, and followed me with all his heart, doing only that which was right in my

eyes, ⁹ but you have done evil above all that were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods, and molten images, provoking me to anger, and have cast me behind your back; ¹⁰ therefore behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jerobo'am, and will cut off from Jerobo'am every male, both bond and free in Israel, and will utterly consume the house of Jerobo'am, as a man burns up dung until it is all gone. ¹¹ Any one belonging to Jerobo'am who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and any one who dies in the open country the birds of the air shall eat; for the LORD has spoken it.'"

¹² Arise therefore, go to your house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. ¹³ And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jerobo'am shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something pleasing to the LORD, the God of Israel, in the house of Jerobo'am. ¹⁴ Moreover the LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jerobo'am today. And henceforth ¹⁵ the LORD will smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and root up Israel out of this good land which he gave to their fathers, and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their Ashe'rim, provoking the LORD to anger. ¹⁶ And he will give Israel up because of the sins of Jerobo'am, which he sinned and which he made Israel to sin."

¹⁷ Then Jerobo'am's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah. And as she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. ¹⁸ And all Israel buried him and mourned for

m Heb obscure

14.1-31: Conclusion of the reigns of Jeroboam and Rehoboam. From this point to the downfall of the northern kingdom (2 Kg.17.6), the writer skillfully weaves back and forth from one kingdom to the other in order to tell the story of both kingdoms as nearly continuously as possible. **1-16:** *Ahijah*, who had encouraged *Jeroboam* to revolt in the first place (11.29-31), now also turns against the king in bitter disappointment. The writer of about 600 B.C. knew how short-lived was the *house* (dynasty) of *Jeroboam* (15.25-30) and how the whole northern kingdom fell in 721 B.C. (v. 15), and he is attempting to explain these somber events in terms of religious apostasy (vv. 9,16). **15:** *Asherim* were wooden poles, symbols of the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah, who is mentioned about forty times in the Old Testament as a temptation to the Israelites. **17:** *Tirzah* was *Jeroboam's* place of residence after Shechem (12.25), thus becom-

him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Ahi'jah the prophet. ¹⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Jerobo'am, how he warred and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ²⁰ And the time that Jerobo'am reigned was twenty-two years; and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

²¹ Now Rehobo'am the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehobo'am was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. His mother's name was Na'amah the Ammonitess. ²² And Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. ²³ For they also built for themselves high places, and pillars, and Ashe'rim on every high hill and under every green tree; ²⁴ and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

²⁵ In the fifth year of King Rehobo'am, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; ²⁶ he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made; ²⁷ and King Rehobo'am made in their stead shields of bronze, and committed them to the hands of the officers of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. ²⁸ And as often as the king went into the house of the LORD, the guard bore them and brought them back to the guardroom.

²⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Rehobo'am, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ³⁰ And there was war between Rehobo'am and Jerobo'am continually. ³¹ And Rehobo'am slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. His mother's name was Na'amah the Ammonitess. And Abi'jam his son reigned in his stead.

15 Now in the eighteenth year of King Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, Abi'jam began to reign over Judah. ² He reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Ma'acah the daughter of Abish'alom. ³ And he walked in all the sins which his father did before him; and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father. ⁴ Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem; ⁵ because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uri'ah the Hittite. ⁶ Now there was war between Rehobo'am and Jerobo'am all the days of his life. ⁷ The rest of the acts of Abi'jam, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? And there was war between Abi'jam and Jerobo'am. ⁸ And Abi'jam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David. And Asa his son reigned in his stead.

⁹ In the twentieth year of Jerobo'am king of Israel Asa began to reign over Judah, ¹⁰ and he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Ma'acah the daughter of Abish'alom. ¹¹ And Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his

ing the capital of Israel (15.33) until Samaria was built (16.24). **21-31:** The reign of Rehoboam. Judah at this time did no better than Israel, according to the writer (vv. 22-24). According to Egyptian sources, *Shishak* (v. 25) also invaded Israel; a fragment of his stela has been found in the excavations at Megiddo.

15.1-8: Abijam of Judah was little better than his father. Verse 6 is out of place; compare 14.30. **9-24:** Asa of Judah. This king is credited with reforms and given a fairly clean bill of

father had done. ¹² He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. ¹³ He also removed Ma'acah his mother from being queen mother because she had an abominable image made for Ashe'rah; and Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron. ¹⁴ But the high places were not taken away. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was wholly true to the LORD all his days. ¹⁵ And he brought into the house of the LORD the votive gifts of his father and his own votive gifts, silver, and gold, and vessels.

¹⁶ And there was war between Asa and Ba'asha king of Israel all their days. ¹⁷ Ba'asha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. ¹⁸ Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and gave them into the hands of his servants; and King Asa sent them to Ben-ha'dad the son of Tabrim'mon, the son of He'zi-on, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, ¹⁹ "Let there be a league between me and you, as between my father and your father: behold, I am sending to you a present of silver and gold; go, break your league with Ba'asha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me."

²⁰ And Ben-ha'dad hearkened to King Asa, and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and conquered Ijon, Dan, A'bel-bethma'acah, and all Chin'neroth, with all the land of Naph'tali. ²¹ And when Ba'asha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah, and he dwelt in Tirzah. ²² Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah, none was exempt, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which

Ba'asha had been building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. ²³ Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? But in his old age he was diseased in his feet. ²⁴ And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; and Jehosh'aphat his son reigned in his stead.

²⁵ Nadab the son of Jerobo'am began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah; and he reigned over Israel two years. ²⁶ He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.

²⁷ Ba'asha the son of Ahi'jah, of the house of Is'sachar, conspired against him; and Ba'asha struck him down at Gib'bethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gib'bethon. ²⁸ So Ba'asha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead. ²⁹ And as soon as he was king, he killed all the house of Jerobo'am; he left to the house of Jerobo'am not one that breathed, until he had destroyed it, according to the word of the LORD which he spoke by his servant Ahi'jah the Shi'lonite; ³⁰ it was for the sins of Jerobo'am which he sinned and which he made Israel to sin, and because of the anger to which he provoked the LORD, the God of Israel.

³¹ Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ³² And there was war between Asa and Ba'asha king of Israel all their days.

³³ In the third year of Asa king of

religious health. 1: *Asherah*, see 14.15 n. Asa carried on continual war with Israel, and successfully bribed *Ben-hadad . . . king of Syria* to change sides, thus tipping the balance in favor of Judah. 25-32: Nadab of Israel and his assassination. Here begins a series of assassinations of kings of Israel, interpreted by the writer as a just judgment against the northern kingdom (vv. 29-30); see 14.1-16 n.

Judah, Ba'asha the son of Ahi'jah began to reign over all Israel at Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years.³⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jerobo'am and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.

16 And the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hana'ni against Ba'asha, saying, ² "Since I exalted you out of the dust and made you leader over my people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jerobo'am, and have made my people Israel to sin, provoking me to anger with their sins,³ behold, I will utterly sweep away Ba'asha and his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat. ⁴ Any one belonging to Ba'asha who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and any one of his who dies in the field the birds of the air shall eat."

⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Ba'asha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

⁶ And Ba'asha slept with his fathers, and was buried at Tirzah; and Elah his son reigned in his stead. ⁷ Moreover the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hana'ni against Ba'asha and his house, both because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jerobo'am, and also because he destroyed it.

⁸ In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Ba'asha began to reign over Israel in Tirzah, and reigned two years. ⁹ But his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him. When he was at Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, who was over the household in Tirzah, ¹⁰ Zimri came in and struck him down and killed him, in the twenty-seventh year

of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

¹¹ When he began to reign, as soon as he had seated himself on his throne, he killed all the house of Ba'asha; he did not leave him a single male of his kinsmen or his friends. ¹² Thus Zimri destroyed all the house of Ba'asha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke against Ba'asha by Jehu the prophet, ¹³ for all the sins of Ba'asha and the sins of Elah his son which they sinned, and which they made Israel to sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols. ¹⁴ Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

¹⁵ In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah. Now the troops were encamped against Gib'bethon, which belonged to the Philistines, ¹⁶ and the troops who were encamped heard it said, "Zimri has conspired, and he has killed the king"; therefore all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. ¹⁷ So Omri went up from Gib'bethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. ¹⁸ And when Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house, and burned the king's house over him with fire, and died, ¹⁹ because of his sins which he committed, doing evil in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of Jerobo'am, and for his sin which he committed, making Israel to sin. ²⁰ Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the conspiracy which he made, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

²¹ Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts; half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed

15.33-16.7: Baasha of Israel. A new prophet, *Jehu the son of Hanani*, takes up the theme of condemnation already made familiar by Ahijah the Shilonite. **16.8-14: Elah of Israel** and his assassination by *Zimri*. Note the now familiar evaluation in v. 13. **15-20: Zimri of Israel** is attacked by *Omri* and commits suicide. **21-28: Omri of Israel.** *Omri* was an able and important

Omri. ²² But the people who followed Omri overcame the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath; so Tibni died, and Omri became king. ²³ In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri began to reign over Israel, and reigned for twelve years; six years he reigned in Tirzah. ²⁴ He bought the hill of Sama'ria from Shemer for two talents of silver; and he fortified the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Sama'ria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill.

²⁵ Omri did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did more evil than all who were before him. ²⁶ For he walked in all the way of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, and in the sins which he made Israel to sin, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols. ²⁷ Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ²⁸ And Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Sama'ria; and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

²⁹ In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in

Sama'ria twenty-two years. ³⁰ And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all that were before him. ³¹ And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, he took for wife Jez'ebel the daughter of Ethba'al king of the Sido'nians, and went and served Ba'al, and worshiped him. ³² He erected an altar for Ba'al in the house of Ba'al, which he built in Sama'ria. ³³ And Ahab made an Ashe'rah. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. ³⁴ In his days Hi'el of Bethel built Jericho; he laid its foundation at the cost of Abi'ram his first-born, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

|| ⁷ Now Eli'jah the Tishbite, of Tishbe" in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." ² And the word of the LORD came to him, ³ "Depart from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, that is east

n Gk: Heb of the settlers

king, as we know from extra-Biblical sources. The Moabite Stone tells us that he subjugated Moab, and the Assyrian records refer to Israel as "the land of the house of Omri" long after Omri's descendants had ceased to rule. The Deuteronomic writer, interested chiefly in religious matters, lists among the accomplishments of Omri only the founding of Samaria as the new capital. Otherwise, the king is roundly condemned, no doubt chiefly because he married his son Ahab to Jezebel, the daughter of the king of the neighboring Phoenicians (*Sidonians*). This was good political policy, but it turned out to be religiously disastrous.

16.29-34: Introduction to the reign of Ahab in Israel. This reign is treated in great detail (17.1-22.40) because of the religious crisis that ensued. *The Sidonians*, see 5.1-6 n. *Asherah*, see 14.15 n. **34:** The bodies of the children were buried under the foundations to bring good luck to the building project. Such practices were regarded as abominable by the Deuteronomists; hence the curse in Jos.6.26. The last clause of v. 34 was added to bring the account into conformity with the passage in Joshua.

17.1-24: The beginning of the story of Elijah. 1 Kg. ch. 17 to 2 Kg. ch. 10 is mostly a detailed account of affairs in the northern kingdom, featuring the prophets Elijah and Elisha, the reign of Ahab, and the destruction of the dynasty of Omri. These stories are based on good northern source material, brought to Judah by refugees from Israel. It must be remembered that all final redaction was done in Judah, and therefore we are fortunate in having this northern material. The element of the miraculous in the stories must be accepted as an integral part of the writer's method. The ancients did not have the concept of the uniformity of nature. **1-7:** The story opens abruptly, leading some to believe that the beginning, with a proper introduction of Elijah, has been lost. **1:** The Canaanite (or Phoenician) god Baal (16.31-32) was held by his worshipers to be the one who controlled the rain. Elijah intended to show that

of the Jordan. ⁴ You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” ⁵ So he went and did according to the word of the LORD; he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. ⁶ And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. ⁷ And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him, ⁹ “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” ¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹² And she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a cruse; and now, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” ¹³ And Elijah said to her, “Fear not; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make for yourself and your son.” ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD the God of Israel, ‘The jar of meal shall not be spent, and the cruse of oil shall not fail, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’” ¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said; and she, and he, and her

household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD which he spoke by Elijah.

¹⁷ After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. ¹⁸ And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!” ¹⁹ And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber, where he lodged, and laid him upon his own bed. ²⁰ And he cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, hast thou brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?” ²¹ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this child’s soul come into him again.” ²² And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. ²³ And Elijah took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, “See, your son lives.” ²⁴ And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”

18 After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.” ² So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was

his God, the LORD the God of Israel, was the one who really controlled the rain. 3: The words *east of the Jordan* (also v. 5) probably refer to territory outside of Ahab’s jurisdiction. Ahab had been eagerly seeking to apprehend the prophet in order to find some reconciliation with him to end the drought (18.10). 8–16: *Zarephath*, on the Phoenician coast, was definitely in territory beyond the control of Ahab. 17–24: Some have argued that the child was not really dead, and hence that no miracle was involved. This is beside the point. The writer meant to portray a powerful God and a worthy prophet (compare 2 Kg.4.32–37; Acts 20.9–12).

18.1–46: The contest on Mount Carmel. 1–6: The drought is about to end. The question is, Which God withholds and sends the rain: Yahweh (the LORD) or the great Baal, called Baal of the Heavens by his followers? The very name of *Elijah*, meaning “Yah [short form of Yahweh,

severe in Sama'ria. ³ And Ahab called Obadi'ah, who was over the household. (Now Obadi'ah revered the LORD greatly; ⁴ and when Jez'ebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadi'ah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) ⁵ And Ahab said to Obadi'ah, "Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, and not lose some of the animals." ⁶ So they divided the land between them to pass through it; Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadi'ah went in another direction by himself.

⁷ And as Obadi'ah was on the way, behold, Eli'jah met him; and Obadi'ah recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is it you, my lord Eli'jah?"

⁸ And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your lord, 'Behold, Eli'jah is here.'" ⁹ And he said, "Wherein have I sinned, that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? ¹⁰ As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord has not sent to seek you; and when they would say, 'He is not here,' he would take an oath of the kingdom or nation, that they had not found you. ¹¹ And now you say, 'Go, tell your lord, 'Behold, Eli'jah is here.'"

¹² And as soon as I have gone from you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you whither I know not; and so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have revered the LORD from my youth. ¹³ Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jez'ebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? ¹⁴ And

now you say, 'Go, tell your lord, "Behold, Eli'jah is here"' ; and he will kill me." ¹⁵ And Eli'jah said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today." ¹⁶ So Obadi'ah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Eli'jah.

¹⁷ When Ahab saw Eli'jah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?" ¹⁸ And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father's house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed the Ba'als. ¹⁹ Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Ba'al and the four hundred prophets of Ashe'rah, who eat at Jez'ebel's table."

²⁰ So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel, and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. ²¹ And Eli'jah came near to all the people, and said, "How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Ba'al, then follow him." And the people did not answer him a word. ²² Then Eli'jah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD; but Ba'al's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³ Let two bulls be given to us; and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; and I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, and put no fire to it. ²⁴ And you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken." ²⁵ Then Eli'jah said to the prophets of Ba'al, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many; and

the LORD] is God," proclaims his faith. *Obadiah* means "Servant of Yahweh." *Jezebel* has been persecuting the prophets of the LORD (Yahweh). 7-16: Ahab has been hunting *Elijah* everywhere, but now the prophet volunteers to meet the king (see 17.1-7 n.). 17-19: *Elijah* is quick to point out that the fault lies with Ahab in not recognizing the LORD as the supreme God, and in allowing his wife *Jezebel* to propagate her religion in Israel. *Asherah*, one of the consorts of *Baal* (see 14.15 n.). The *Baals* were the local versions of the great sky-god, *Baal*; thus there was one *Baal*, but also many *Baals*. 20-29: The contest begins; the Baal worshipers test their god

call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it.”²⁶ And they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning until noon, saying, “O Ba'al, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped about the altar which they had made.²⁷ And at noon Eli'jah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is musing, or he has gone aside, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.”²⁸ And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.²⁹ And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice; no one answered, no one heeded.

30 Then Eli'jah said to all the people, “Come near to me”; and all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down; ³¹ Eli'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, “Israel shall be your name”; ³² and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. ³³ And he put the wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the wood.” ³⁴ And he said, “Do it a second time”; and they did it a second time. And he said, “Do it

a third time”; and they did it a third time.³⁵ And the water ran round about the altar, and filled the trench also with water.

36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Eli'jah the prophet came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.” ³⁷ Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that thou, O LORD, art God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back.” ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.” ⁴⁰ And Eli'jah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Ba'al; let not one of them escape.” And they seized them; and Eli'jah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there.

41 And Eli'jah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.” ⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Eli'jah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bowed himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked, and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again seven times.” ⁴⁴ And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising

first. 26: *They limped about the altar*, i.e. they performed a kind of limping dance, bending first one knee and then the other. This form of ritual is well known from a number of sources (compare Ps.26.6-7). 27: One of the sharpest satires on paganism ever penned. *He has gone aside* is probably a euphemism for attending to natural needs. 28: Ritualistic gashing of one's self was fairly common (compare Dt.14.1; Lev.19.28; Hos.7.14; Jer.16.6; 41.5; 47.5). 29: *The time of the offering of the oblation* was 3 p.m. (compare 2 Kg.16.15; Acts 3.1). 30-35: Verses 31-32a are an editorial insertion based on Gen.35.10. 38: Some wish to rationalize *the fire of the LORD* by calling it lightning preceding the rain; but it must be borne in mind that the ancient writer intended to describe a miracle. 40: The slaughter of *the prophets of Baal* is sometimes interpreted as a vast human sacrifice to the LORD. The people of the time and the (slightly later) writer saw the struggle between Baal and the LORD as one of life and death. 41-46: *Eat and drink*, i.e. break the fast which was in effect during the religious ceremonies. The end of the drought was supposed to be final proof that the LORD, not Baal, ruled the heavens, and con-

out of the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'"

⁴⁵ And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ And the hand of the LORD was on Eli'jah; and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

19 Ahab told Jez'ebel all that Eli'jah had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jez'ebel sent a messenger to Eli'jah, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." ³ Then he was afraid, and he arose and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree; and he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers." ⁵ And he lay down and slept under a broom tree; and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." ⁶ And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank, and lay down again. ⁷ And the angel of the LORD came again a second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you."

⁸ And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

⁹ And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Eli'jah?" ¹⁰ He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹¹ And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ And when Eli'jah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Eli'jah?" ¹⁴ He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹⁵ And the LORD said

trolled the destinies of the Israelites. The town of *Jezreel*, near Mount Gilboa (1 Sam.29.1; 31.1), was used by *Ahab* as a second place of residence (21.1), the primary capital being Samaria (16.24; 20.43; 21.1). *Elijah* ran seventeen miles (a feasible feat for a man of the desert) before the *chariot* of *Ahab*, in a high state of excitement, to herald what he considered a complete victory over the forces of Baal.

19.1-18: The revelation to *Elijah* on Mount Horeb. **1-3:** The power of *Jezebel* very quickly turned the tables, and *Elijah* was afraid. Suddenly, it seems, he is at *Beer-sheba*, one hundred and thirty miles south of *Jezreel* (see 17.8-16 n.), well within *Judah*. **4-8:** By miraculous divine help, the prophet arrived at *Horeb*, the place where the LORD revealed the law to Moses, according to northern (Israelite) tradition—called Sinai in the southern (Judahite) literature. The round number, *forty days*, simply indicates a great distance (compare Ex.34.28). The traditional site of Mount Horeb, probably not intended here, is some two hundred miles to the south. **9-18:** Compare Ex.33.17-23. **12:** The *still small voice* was a voice demanding the slaughter of all enemies of the LORD. *Elijah* was willing to oblige, for he was "very zealous" (a better translation than *very jealous* in v. 14). **15:** *The wilderness of Damascus*, the Syrian Desert. **18:** The

to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall anoint Haz'ael to be king over Syria; ¹⁶ and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel; and Eli'sha the son of Shaphat of A'bel-meho'lah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷ And him who escapes from the sword of Haz'ael shall Jehu slay; and him who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Eli'sha slay. ¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Ba'al, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

¹⁹ So he departed from there, and found Eli'sha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing, with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Eli'jah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him. ²⁰ And he left the oxen, and ran after Eli'jah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?" ²¹ And he returned from following him, and took the yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Eli'jah, and ministered to him.

20 Ben-ha'dad the king of Syria gathered all his army together; thirty-two kings were with him, and horses and chariots; and he went up and besieged Sama'ria, and fought

against it. ² And he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-ha'dad: ³ 'Your silver and your gold are mine; your fairest wives and children also are mine.' " ⁴ And the king of Israel answered, "As you say, my lord, O king, I am yours, and all that I have." ⁵ The messengers came again, and said, "Thus says Ben-ha'dad: 'I sent to you, saying, "Deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; ⁶ nevertheless I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants, and lay hands on whatever pleases them,^o and take it away.' "

⁷ Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Mark, now, and see how this man is seeking trouble; for he sent to me for my wives and my children, and for my silver and my gold, and I did not refuse him." ⁸ And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not heed or consent." ⁹ So he said to the messengers of Ben-ha'dad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you first demanded of your servant I will do; but this thing I cannot do.' " And the messengers departed and brought him word again. ¹⁰ Ben-ha'dad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Sama'ria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people who follow me." ¹¹ And the king of Israel an-

^o Gk Syr Vg: Heb you

words *seven thousand* express the idea of the righteous remnant, which appears again in Am.5.15; Is.10.20; 11.11. *Kissed* the Baal image, see Hos.13.2.

19.19-21: The call of Elisha. *Elijah* returns from Horeb and proceeds to carry out first the third command of the "still small voice." He did not actually "anoint" *Elisha* (v. 16), but *cast his mantle upon him*. The end of v. 20 means, "Go, and return to me, for I have done something very important to you." For similar extemporaneous sacrifices (v. 21), compare 1 Sam. 6.14; 2 Sam.24.22-25. It was *Elisha*, not *Elijah*, who carried out the first and second injunctions of the "voice" (2 Kg.8.13; 9.1-3).

20.1-43: Ahab's wars with Syria; prophetic opposition to his policy. Verses 1-34 come from a source favorable to *Ahab*, in sharp contrast to vv. 35-43 and to chs. 17-19 and ch. 21; *Elijah* and *Elisha* disappear for a moment. *Ahab* appears as an able and popular ruler; his *people* stand by him in adversity (v. 8), and the prophets of the LORD support him (vv. 13-14,22); to a defeated enemy he shows noble generosity (vv. 32,34). **1-6:** *Kings* here no doubt means, as often in the Bible, petty rulers of small independent towns. The second demand (v. 6) was more drastic even than the first (v. 3), amounting to the privilege of unlimited looting. **11:** Ahab quotes a proverb to the effect that as long as there is a battle to be fought, one should not boast; the

swered, "Tell him, 'Let not him that girds on his armor boast himself as he that puts it off.'" ¹² When Ben-ha'dad heard this message as he was drinking with the kings in the booths, he said to his men, "Take your positions." And they took their positions against the city.

¹³ And behold, a prophet came near to Ahab king of Israel and said, "Thus says the LORD, Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will give it into your hand this day; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

¹⁴ And Ahab said, "By whom?" He said, "Thus says the LORD, By the servants of the governors of the districts." Then he said, "Who shall begin the battle?" He answered, "You." ¹⁵ Then he mustered the servants of the governors of the districts, and they were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people of Israel, seven thousand.

¹⁶ And they went out at noon, while Ben-ha'dad was drinking himself drunk in the booths, he and the thirty-two kings who helped him.

¹⁷ The servants of the governors of the districts went out first. And Ben-ha'dad sent out scouts, and they reported to him, "Men are coming out from Sama'ria." ¹⁸ He said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; or if they have come out for war, take them alive."

¹⁹ So these went out of the city, the servants of the governors of the districts, and the army which followed them. ²⁰ And each killed his man; the Syrians fled and Israel pursued them, but Ben-ha'dad king of Syria escaped on a horse with horsemen. ²¹ And the king of Israel went out, and captured the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

²² Then the prophet came near to the king of Israel, and said to him, "Come, strengthen yourself, and consider well what you have to do; for in

the spring the king of Syria will come up against you."

²³ And the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hills, and so they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they." ²⁴ And do this: remove the kings, each from his post, and put commanders in their places; ²⁵ and muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot; then we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they." And he hearkened to their voice, and did so.

²⁶ In the spring Ben-ha'dad mustered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. ²⁷ And the people of Israel were mustered, and were provisioned, and went against them; the people of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, but the Syrians filled the country. ²⁸ And a man of God came near and said to the king of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD is a god of the hills but he is not a god of the valleys," therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.'" ²⁹ And they encamped opposite one another seven days. Then on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the people of Israel smote of the Syrians a hundred thousand foot soldiers in one day. ³⁰ And the rest fled into the city of Aphek; and the wall fell upon twenty-seven thousand men that were left.

Ben-ha'dad also fled, and entered an inner chamber in the city. ³¹ And his servants said to him, "Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings; let us put sackcloth on our loins and ropes upon our heads, and go out to

p Gk: Heb smote

battle may go either way. ²⁴: The kings were figureheads, the commanders experienced military men. ²⁹: The figure hundred thousand foot soldiers is not to be taken numerically; the meaning

the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life.”³² So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and went to the king of Israel and said, “Your servant Ben-ha’dad says, ‘Pray, let me live.’” And he said, “Does he still live? He is my brother.”

³³ Now the men were watching for an omen, and they quickly took it up from him and said, “Yes, your brother Ben-ha’dad.” Then he said, “Go and bring him.” Then Ben-ha’dad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. ³⁴ And Ben-ha’dad said to him, “The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may establish bazaars for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Sama’ria.” And Ahab said, “I will let you go on these terms.” So he made a covenant with him and let him go.

³⁵ And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his fellow at the command of the LORD, “Strike me, I pray.” But the man refused to strike him. ³⁶ Then he said to him, “Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as you have gone from me, a lion shall kill you.” And as soon as he had departed from him, a lion met him and killed him. ³⁷ Then he found another man, and said, “Strike me, I pray.” And the man struck him, smiting and wounding him. ³⁸ So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, disguising himself with a bandage over his eyes. ³⁹ And as the king passed, he cried to the king and said, “Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and behold, a soldier turned and brought a man to me, and said, ‘Keep this man; if by any means he be miss-

ing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.’”

⁴⁰ And as your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.” The king of Israel said to him, “So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it.”

⁴¹ Then he made haste to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. ⁴² And he said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Because you have let go out of your hand the man whom I had devoted to destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.’” ⁴³ And the king of Israel went to his house resentful and sullen, and came to Sama’ria.

21 Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of Sama’ria. ² And after this Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.” ³ But Naboth said to Ahab, “The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.” ⁴ And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him; for he had said, “I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food.

⁵ But Jez’ebel his wife came to him, and said to him, “Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?” ⁶ And he said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it please you, I will give you an-

is “a large number.” **35-43:** The change of tone in this section from another source should be noted. Ahab is violently criticized for what seems a noble act in v. 34. **39:** *A talent of silver*, roughly fifteen hundred dollars, would have been an enormous fine in those days. **42:** On the ban or “herem,” a practice whereby something or someone is *devoted to destruction* as a religious act, see Jos.6.17 n.; 1 Sam.15.3 n.

21.1-29: Naboth’s vineyard. In this chapter Elijah and the source concerned with him return. **1-4:** Naboth could not give up “*the inheritance of my fathers*” because by well established legal and religious custom, ancestral property must remain in the family in perpetuity (Lev.25.10, 13-17,23-24,34). Ahab was vexed and sullen because he knew that Naboth was legally and religiously right. **5-7:** Jezebel had no real respect for the laws and religion of Israel. **8-14:** For

other vineyard for it'; and he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"⁷ And Jez'ebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city.⁹ And she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people;¹⁰ and set two base fellows opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out, and stone him to death."¹¹ And the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jez'ebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters which she had sent to them,¹² they proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.¹³ And the two base fellows came in and sat opposite him; and the base fellows brought a charge against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the city, and stoned him to death with stones.¹⁴ Then they sent to Jez'ebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned; he is dead."

15 As soon as Jez'ebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jez'ebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead."¹⁶ And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 Then the word of the LORD came to Eli'jah the Tishbite, saying,¹⁸ "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Sama'ria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession.¹⁹ And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Have you killed, and also taken possession?"' And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood."'"

20 Ahab said to Eli'jah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" He answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the LORD.²¹ Behold, I will bring evil upon you; I will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel;²² and I will make your house like the house of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, and like the house of Ba'asha the son of Ahi'jah, for the anger to which you have provoked me, and because you have made Israel to sin."²³ And of Jez'ebel the LORD also said, "The dogs shall eat Jez'ebel within the bounds of Jezreel."²⁴ Any one belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and any one of his who dies in the open country the birds of the air shall eat."

25 (There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jez'ebel his wife incited.²⁶ He did very abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the people of Israel.)

27 And when Ahab heard those words, he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about

a fast as part of the solemn assembly when a serious problem was to be considered, see Jg.20.26; 1 Sam.7.6; 14.24. To set Naboth on high probably means that he, as a prominent citizen, was to preside. Two witnesses and death by stoning, see Dt.17.5-6; 19.15. Naboth cursed God and the king, compare Ex.22.28; Lev.24.10-16. 22-24: Probably an expansion of Elijah's speech by the Deuteronomic editor (compare 13.33-34; 14.10-11; 16.1-4; 2 Kg.9.35-36). 25-26: The evaluation by the Deuteronomic editor, breaking the connection between vv. 24 and 27. Amorites, see 2 Sam.21.2 n. 29: This verse, in the light of what happened, appraises the situation more realistically than vv. 21 and 24; it was perhaps added by the second Deuteronomist.

dejectedly. ²⁸ And the word of the LORD came to Eli'jah the Tishbite, saying, ²⁹ "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the evil upon his house."

22 For three years Syria and Israel continued without war. ² But in the third year Jehosh'aphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. ³ And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and we keep quiet and do not take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" ⁴ And he said to Jehosh'aphat, "Will you go with me to battle at Ramoth-gilead?" And Jehosh'aphat said to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."

⁵ And Jehosh'aphat said to the king of Israel, "Inquire first for the word of the LORD." ⁶ Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I forbear?" And they said, "Go up; for the LORD will give it into the hand of the king." ⁷ But Jehosh'aphat said, "Is there not here another prophet of the LORD of whom we may inquire?" ⁸ And the king of Israel said to Jehosh'aphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah the son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil." And Jehosh'aphat said, "Let not the king say so." ⁹ Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said,

"Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah." ¹⁰ Now the king of Israel and Jehosh'aphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Sama'ria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. ¹¹ And Zedeki'ah the son of Chena'anah made for himself horns of iron, and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" ¹² And all the prophets prophesied so, and said, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

¹³ And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king; let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." ¹⁴ But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I will speak." ¹⁵ And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?" And he answered him, "Go up and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king." ¹⁶ But the king said to him, "How many times shall I adjure you that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?" ¹⁷ And he said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd; and the LORD said, 'These have no master; let each return to his home in peace.'" ¹⁸ And the king of Israel said to Jehosh'aphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but

22.1-53: Ahab dies in battle; reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah; accession of Ahaziah in Israel. Verses 1-40 resume the story of the Syrian (Aramean) wars from ch. 20. **1-4:** During the *three years* of peace between themselves, *Syria and Israel* had formed a military alliance and had successfully fought, together with other allies, against the invading Assyrians at Qarqar (853 B.C.), thus preserving both kingdoms. Ahab now formed an alliance with *Jehoshaphat*, marrying his daughter Athaliah to the son of the *king of Judah* (2 Kg.8.18,26); for he had quarreled with the *king of Syria* over the possession of the town of *Ramoth-gilead*, east of the Jordan (4.13; Dt.4.43). **5-12:** The need to *inquire* of one's god before a battle was widely felt in ancient times (1 Sam.28.2). In this source the *prophets* of the LORD are mostly on the side of Ahab (compare 20.13,23). Yet there is one *prophet of the LORD*, not Elijah, but *Micaiah*, who appears only here and is hostile. *Horns of iron*, compare Dt.33.17; Zech.1.18-21. **15:** *Micaiah* mimics the "yes

evil?" ¹⁹ And Micai'ah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; ²⁰ and the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. ²¹ Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.' ²² And the LORD said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go forth and do so.' ²³ Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has spoken evil concerning you."

²⁴ Then Zedeki'ah the son of Chena'anah came near and struck Micai'ah on the cheek, and said, "How did the Spirit of the LORD go from me to speak to you?" ²⁵ And Micai'ah said, "Behold, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide yourself." ²⁶ And the king of Israel said, "Seize Micai'ah, and take him back to Amon the governor of the city and to Jo'ash the king's son; ²⁷ and say, 'Thus says the king, "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with scant fare of bread and water, until I come in peace." ' " ²⁸ And Micai'ah said, "If you return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Hear, all you peoples!"

²⁹ So the king of Israel and Jehosh'aphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. ³⁰ And the king of Israel said to Jehosh'aphat, "I will dis-

guise myself and go into battle, but you wear your robes." And the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. ³¹ Now the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, "Fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel." ³² And when the captains of the chariots saw Jehosh'aphat, they said, "It is surely the king of Israel." So they turned to fight against him; and Jehosh'aphat cried out. ³³ And when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. ³⁴ But a certain man drew his bow at a venture, and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate; therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn about, and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded." ³⁵ And the battle grew hot that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians, until at evening he died; and the blood of the wound flowed into the bottom of the chariot. ³⁶ And about sunset a cry went through the army, "Every man to his city, and every man to his country!"

³⁷ So the king died, and was brought to Sama'ria; and they buried the king in Sama'ria. ³⁸ And they washed the chariot by the pool of Sama'ria, and the dogs licked up his blood, and the harlots washed themselves in it, according to the word of the LORD which he had spoken. ³⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he built, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of

men" of the king. 19-23: The celestial scene portrayed here is unique in the earlier literature of Israel. The *lying spirit*, here still under the control of the LORD, later developed into the figure of Satan (compare Zech.3.1-2; Job chs. 1-2). 26: Ahab put the prisoner in charge of the king's son (one of his own sons) for maximum security. 27-28: *In peace*, i.e. "victorious." 30: The *disguise* shows that Ahab was fearful that Micaiah might be right. 31: *Thirty-two captains*, compare 20.1,24. 38: This verse is editorial, with reference to 21.19, though Naboth died in Jezreel. The addition of the *harlots* symbolizes the fertility cult, a prominent feature of the Baal religion that included sacred prostitution. 39: *The ivory house*, a palace in Samaria, decorated with carved ivory inlay and containing furniture so decorated. Some of these decorative inlays have been found in the archaeological excavation at Samaria (compare 10.22; Am.3.15;

Israel? ⁴⁰ So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahazi'ah his son reigned in his stead.

41 Jehosh'aphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. ⁴² Jehosh'aphat was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azu'bah the daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³ He walked in all the way of Asa his father; he did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD; yet the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. ⁴⁴ Jehosh'aphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehosh'aphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ⁴⁶ And the remnant of the male cult prostitutes who remained in the days of his father Asa, he exterminated from the land.

47 There was no king in Edom; a deputy was king. ⁴⁸ Jehosh'aphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold; but they did not go, for the ships were wrecked at E'zion-ge'ber. ⁴⁹ Then Ahazi'ah the son of Ahab said to Jehosh'aphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships," but Jehosh'aphat was not willing. ⁵⁰ And Jehosh'aphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; and Jeho'ram his son reigned in his stead.

51 Ahazi'ah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Sama'ria in the seventeenth year of Jehosh'aphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel. ⁵² He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. ⁵³ He served Ba'al and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger in every way that his father had done.

6.4; Ps.45.8). 41-46: *Jehoshaphat of Judah* is credited with certain reforms and given qualified approval by the Deuteronomic editor, as was his father *Asa* (15.9-14). 47-50: *Jehoshaphat* controlled Edom (2 Chr. ch. 20), and wished to imitate Solomon in maritime operations (compare 9.26-28; 10.22). *Ships of Tarshish*, see 10.22 n. 48-49: For a different version, see 2 Chr. 20.35-37. 51-53: *Ahaziah* is condemned by the Deuteronomic editor, as are all the kings of *Israel*. The account of his reign is continued immediately in 2 Kg. ch. 1.

KINGS

Since 1 and 2 Kings are really one book, the problems and sources common to both are discussed in the Introduction to 1 Kings. Second Kings continues the story of the Hebrew monarchies. Chapters 1–17 describe the period from the reigns of Ahaziah of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah until the fall of Samaria and the end of the kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. Chapters 18–25 relate the story of the kingdom of Judah from the fall of the kingdom of Israel to the fall of Judah with the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., ending with a brief account of the governorship of Gedaliah and the elevation of King Jehoiachin in exile. The book thus covers the period from the middle of the ninth century to near the middle of the sixth century (see “Survey of . . . Bible Lands,” § 12). The fall of both Israel and Judah is interpreted in terms of the judgment of the Lord.

AFTER THE DEATH OF AHAB, MOAB rebelled against Israel.

2 Now Ahazi'ah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Sama'ria, and lay sick; so he sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Ba'al-ze'bub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this sickness.”³ But the angel of the LORD said to Eli'jah the Tishbite, “Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Sama'ria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Ba'al-ze'bub, the god of Ekron?’”⁴ Now therefore thus says the LORD, ‘You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone, but you shall surely die.’” So Eli'jah went.

5 The messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, “Why have you returned?”⁶ And they said to him, “There came a man to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, Thus says the LORD, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Ba'al-ze'bub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down

from the bed to which you have gone, but shall surely die.’”⁷ He said to them, “What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?”⁸ They answered him, “He wore a garment of haircloth, with a girdle of leather about his loins.” And he said, “It is Eli'jah the Tishbite.”

9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty men with his fifty. He went up to Eli'jah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, “O man of God, the king says, ‘Come down.’”¹⁰ But Eli'jah answered the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then fire came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

11 Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty men with his fifty. And he went up^a and said to him, “O man of God, this is the king's order, ‘Come down quickly!’”¹² But Eli'jah answered them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then the fire of God came down from

^a Gk Compare verses 9, 13: Heb answered

1.1–18: The reappearance of Elijah, the death of Ahaziah, and the accession of Jehoram of Israel. 1: This information is probably out of place here (compare 3.5). **2–5: The lattice**, some sort of protective fence or grating, in this case failed to perform its function. *Baal-zebub* means “lord of flies”; it is a mocking distortion of Baal-zebul, meaning either “lord of the divine abode,” or “Baal the Prince,” one of the names and manifestations of the great Baal, the rival of the God of Israel (see 1 Kg.18.1–6 n., 17–19 n.). Later, the name of this pagan deity became a synonym for Satan in Jewish theology (Mt.10.25; 12.24; Mk.3.22; Lk.11.15–19). If Ahaziah was a son of Jezebel, it is not surprising that he preferred Baal to the LORD. **9–16: As before**

heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

13 Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Eli'jah, and entreated him, "O man of God, I pray you, let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight." 14 Lo, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties; but now let my life be precious in your sight." 15 Then the angel of the LORD said to Eli'jah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king, 16 and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Ba'al-ze'bub, the god of Ekron,—is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word?—therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone, but you shall surely die.'"

17 So he died according to the word of the LORD which Eli'jah had spoken. Jeho'ram, his brother,^b became king in his stead in the second year of Jeho'ram the son of Jehosh'aphat, king of Judah, because Ahazi'ah had no son. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahazi'ah which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

2 Now when the LORD was about to take Eli'jah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Eli'jah and Eli'sha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 And Eli'jah said to Eli'sha, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Eli'sha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I

will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. 3 And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Eli'sha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."

4 Eli'jah said to him, "Eli'sha, tarry here, I pray you; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. 5 The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Eli'sha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."

6 Then Eli'jah said to him, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. 7 Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. 8 Then Eli'jah took his mantle, and rolled it up, and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

9 When they had crossed, Eli'jah said to Eli'sha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Eli'sha said, "I pray you, let me inherit a double share of your spirit." 10 And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if you do not see me, it

^b Gk Syr: Heb lacks his brother

(1 Kg.18.38), the power of God acting through Elijah is symbolized by fire. 17: *Jehoram*, son of Ahab and king of Israel, must not be confused with his brother-in-law, *Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat*, king of Judah (8.18,26).

2.1-25: *Elijah, taken up to heaven, is succeeded by Elisha*. As always, the power and greatness of Elijah are expressed by the ancient writer in terms of legend and miracle. According to Biblical tradition, only two men, Enoch (Gen.5.24) and Elijah, were worthy to be taken up by God without having to die. 1-2: This *Gilgal* was north of *Bethel*. 3: The expression *the sons of the prophets* refers not to physical relationship, but means "members of the prophetic order"; see 1 Sam.10.5. 11: The *chariot of fire and horses of fire* continue the symbolism of fire (see

shall not be so.”¹¹ And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Eli’jah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.¹² And Eli’sha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more.

Then he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces.¹³ And he took up the mantle of Eli’jah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

¹⁴ Then he took the mantle of Eli’jah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, “Where is the LORD, the God of Eli’jah?” And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other; and Eli’sha went over.

¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him over against them, they said, “The spirit of Eli’jah rests on Eli’sha.” And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.

¹⁶ And they said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men; pray, let them go, and seek your master; it may be that the Spirit of the LORD has caught him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.”¹⁷ But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send.” They sent therefore fifty men; and for three days they sought him but did not find him.¹⁸ And they came back to him, while he tarried at Jericho, and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, Do not go?”

¹⁹ Now the men of the city said to

Eli’sha, “Behold, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful.”²⁰ He said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him.²¹ Then he went to the spring of water and threw salt in it, and said, “Thus says the LORD, I have made this water wholesome; henceforth neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it.”²² So the water has been wholesome to this day, according to the word which Eli’sha spoke.

²³ He went up from there to Bethel; and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, “Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!”²⁴ And he turned around, and when he saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. And two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the boys.²⁵ From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and thence he returned to Sama’ria.

3 In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Jeho’ram the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Sama’ria, and he reigned twelve years.² He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, though not like his father and mother, for he put away the pillar of Ba’al which his father had made.³ Nevertheless he clung to the sin of Jerobo’am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from it.

⁴ Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder; and he had to deliver annually^c to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and the wool of

^c Tg: Heb lacks *annually*

1.9-16 n.). **12:** Elisha means that Elijah was more important and more powerful than *chariots* and *horsemen*; in 13.14 Elisha receives the same compliment. *Father* as the title of a man of religion is a very old usage (Jg.17.10). **13-14:** See 1 Kg.19.19. **15:** Elisha is acknowledged leader by the *sons of the prophets*. **19-22:** The God-given power of Elisha is attested by a miracle. Today, the finest spring in Jericho is sometimes called Elisha’s Fountain. **23-25:** Not all ancient writers, to say nothing of modern, would have told a story like this to inculcate respect for a prophet. Mt.19.13-15; Mk.10.13-16; Lk.18.15-17 provide a better guide to Biblical teaching on how to treat children. On *forty-two* as a number of ill-omen, compare 10.14; Rev.11.2; 13.5.

3.1-27: The war with Moab. 1-3: In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat does not agree with 1.17 (“second year of Jehoram . . . of Judah”). The data come from two irreconcilable chrono-

a hundred thousand rams. ⁵ But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶ So King Jeho'ram marched out of Sama'ria at that time and mustered all Israel. ⁷ And he went and sent word to Jehosh'aphat king of Judah, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me; will you go with me to battle against Moab?" And he said, "I will go; I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." ⁸ Then he said, "By which way shall we march?" Jeho'ram answered, "By the way of the wilderness of Edom."

⁹ So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. And when they had made a circuitous march of seven days, there was no water for the army or for the beasts which followed them. ¹⁰ Then the king of Israel said, "Alas! The LORD has called these three kings to give them into the hand of Moab."

¹¹ And Jehosh'aphat said, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, through whom we may inquire of the LORD?" Then one of the king of Israel's servants answered, "Eli'sha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Eli'jah." ¹² And Jehosh'aphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehosh'aphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

¹³ And Eli'sha said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother." But the king of Israel said to him, "No; it is

the LORD who has called these three kings to give them into the hand of Moab." ¹⁴ And Eli'sha said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, whom I serve, were it not that I have regard for Jehosh'aphat the king of Judah, I would neither look at you, nor see you. ¹⁵ But now bring me a minstrel." And when the minstrel played, the power of the LORD came upon him. ¹⁶ And he said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I will make this dry stream-bed full of pools.' ¹⁷ For thus says the LORD, 'You shall not see wind or rain, but that stream-bed shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink, you, your cattle, and your beasts.' ¹⁸ This is a light thing in the sight of the LORD; he will also give the Moabites into your hand, ¹⁹ and you shall conquer every fortified city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop up all springs of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones." ²⁰ The next morning, about the time of offering the sacrifice, behold, water came from the direction of Edom, till the country was filled with water.

²¹ When all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to put on armor, from the youngest to the oldest, were called out, and were drawn up at the frontier. ²² And when they rose early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, the Moabites saw the water opposite them as red as blood. ²³ And they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely fought together, and slain one another.

logical systems. 4-8: The famous "Moabite Stone," discovered in 1868 and now in the Louvre, gives an account of the war from the standpoint of *Mesha king of Moab*. In naming *King Jehoram*, the author disregards the brief reign of Ahaziah (vv. 5-6; compare 1 Kg.22.40). The naming of *Jehoshaphat king of Judah* is based on the synchronism in v. 1, not that in 1.17. It was necessary for the king of Israel to get the co-operation of the king of Judah in order to march through the territory west of the Dead Sea on the way to the wilderness of Edom. 9-12: The plan was to strike Moab from the south through Edom. At that time the king of Edom was a vassal of the king of Judah, not a king in his own right (1 Kg.22.47). Poured water on the hands of Elijah (when he washed), i.e. Elisha had waited on his mentor like a servant. 13-20: The phrase the prophets of your mother (prophets of Baal) indicates that Jehoram was a son of Jezebel. 15: The minstrel was used to induce a trance, out of which the prophet could give his oracle (1 Sam.10.5-6; 19.20-24). 16: The dry stream-bed is thought to have been "the brook Zered" (Dt.2.13). 22: Red as blood, colored by the red sandstone of Edom (see Gen.25.30

Now then, Moab, to the spoil!" ²⁴ But when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose and attacked the Moabites, till they fled before them; and they went forward, slaughtering the Moabites as they went.^d ²⁵ And they overthrew the cities, and on every good piece of land every man threw a stone, until it was covered; they stopped every spring of water, and felled all the good trees; till only its stones were left in Kir-har'eseth, and the slingers surrounded and conquered it. ²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom; but they could not. ²⁷ Then he took his eldest son who was to reign in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there came great wrath upon Israel; and they withdrew from him and returned to their own land.

4 Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Eli'sha, "Your servant my husband is dead; and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves." ² And Eli'sha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me; what have you in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house, except a jar of oil."

³ Then he said, "Go outside, borrow vessels of all your neighbors, empty vessels and not too few. ⁴ Then go in, and shut the door upon yourself and your sons, and pour into all these vessels; and when one is full, set it aside." ⁵ So she went from him and shut the door upon herself and her sons; and as she poured they brought the vessels to her. ⁶ When the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "There is not another." Then the oil stopped flowing. ⁷ She came and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest."

⁸ One day Eli'sha went on to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to eat some food. So whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to eat food. ⁹ And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, who is continually passing our way. ¹⁰ Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there."

¹¹ One day he came there, and he turned into the chamber and rested there. ¹² And he said to Geha'zi his servant, "Call this Shu'nammite."

d Gk: Heb uncertain

note s). ²⁷: Human sacrifice, common in many ancient religions, was not unknown among the people of Israel and Judah (Ex.22.29-30; Jg.11.30-31,39; 1 Kg.16.34), though they learned that it was wrong (Gen.22.12; Ex.34.20; Dt.18.10). *The king of Moab* in his terrible extremity made the supreme sacrifice of *his eldest son*, and the forces of Israel were so impressed and so filled with fear of the *great wrath* of Chemosh, the god of Moab, that they gave up the victory that lay within their grasp and hastily *returned to their own land*. Two later kings of Judah, with less excuse, revived the horrible practice there (16.3; 21.6).

4.1-8.6: An interlude on the miracles of Elisha. See 2.19-22 n. In ancient times, miracle stories were considered to be one of the best ways of portraying the importance of a religious leader. We are fortunate in having preserved for us this fine collection of prophetic lore (see 1 Kg. ch. 17 n.). Two differences from Elijah should be noted: *Elisha* belonged to and worked with *the sons of the prophets* (members of the prophetic order living in communities); he was often in the company of the king and the army (compare ch. 3).

4.1-7: *The jar of oil*. This story is a parallel to Elijah's miracle in 1 Kg.17.14-16. Taking *children as slaves* for debt was legal in Israel (Ex.21.7). Later, in Judah, the practice was modified somewhat (Dt.15.12-18; Lev.25.39-46), at least in theory (compare Jer.34.8-16).

4.8-37: *The son restored to life*. The first part of this story (vv. 8-17) exhibits the favorite theme of the birth of a child late in life to a hitherto barren woman (see 1 Sam. ch. 1 n.). The second part of the story (vv. 18-37) parallels the account of Elijah's resuscitation of a child

When he had called her, she stood before him. ¹³ And he said to him, "Say now to her, See, you have taken all this trouble for us; what is to be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?" She answered, "I dwell among my own people." ¹⁴ And he said, "What then is to be done for her?" Geha'zi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old." ¹⁵ He said, "Call her." And when he had called her, she stood in the doorway. ¹⁶ And he said, "At this season, when the time comes round, you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God; do not lie to your maidservant." ¹⁷ But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Eli'sha had said to her.

¹⁸ When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. ¹⁹ And he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." ²⁰ And when he had lifted him, and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. ²¹ And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. ²² Then she called to her husband, and said, "Send me one of the servants and one of the asses, that I may quickly go to the man of God, and come back again." ²³ And he said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath." She said, "It will be well." ²⁴ Then she saddled the ass, and she said to her servant, "Urge the beast on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." ²⁵ So she set out, and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Geha'zi his servant, "Look, yonder is the Shu'nammite; ²⁶ run at once to meet her, and say

to her, Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?" And she answered, "It is well." ²⁷ And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Geha'zi came to thrust her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; and the LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me." ²⁸ Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?" ²⁹ He said to Geha'zi, "Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet any one, do not salute him; and if any one salutes you, do not reply; and lay my staff upon the face of the child."

³⁰ Then the mother of the child said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. ³¹ Geha'zi went on ahead and laid the staff upon the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him, and told him, "The child has not awaked."

³² When Eli'sha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. ³³ So he went in and shut the door upon the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴ Then he went up and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵ Then he got up again, and walked once to and fro in the house, and went up, and stretched himself upon him; the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. ³⁶ Then he summoned Geha'zi and said, "Call this Shu'nammite." So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, "Take up your son." ³⁷ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took up her son and went out.

³⁸ And Eli'sha came again to Gilgal when there was a famine in the

in 1 Kg.17.17-24. **23:** *It is neither new moon nor sabbath;* it was considered more propitious to visit holy men on holy days.

land. And as the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, "Set on the great pot, and boil pottage for the sons of the prophets."³⁹ One of them went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and cut them up into the pot of pottage, not knowing what they were.⁴⁰ And they poured out for the men to eat. But while they were eating of the pottage, they cried out, "O man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it.⁴¹ He said, "Then bring meal." And he threw it into the pot, and said, "Pour out for the men, that they may eat." And there was no harm in the pot.

⁴² A man came from Ba'al-shal'ishah, bringing the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Eli'sha said, "Give to the men, that they may eat."⁴³ But his servant said, "How am I to set this before a hundred men?" So he repeated, "Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left.'"⁴⁴ So he set it before them. And they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

5 Na'aman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.² Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little maid from the land of Israel, and she waited on Na'aman's wife.³ She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Sama'ria! He would cure him of his leprosy."⁴ So Na'aman went in and told his lord, "Thus

and so spoke the maiden from the land of Israel."⁵ And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten festal garments.⁶ And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Na'aman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy."⁷ And when the king of Israel read the letter, he rent his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

⁸ But when Eli'sha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you rent your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel."⁹ So Na'aman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the door of Eli'sha's house.¹⁰ And Eli'sha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean."¹¹ But Na'aman was angry, and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and cure the leper."¹² Are not Aba'na^e and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.¹³ But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not

^e Another reading is *Amana*

4.38-41: The spoiled pottage. Compare 2.19-22. **42-44:** The twenty loaves. The most striking parallels to this miracle are to be found in the New Testament, Mt.14.13-21; 15.32-38.

5.1-27: The curing of the leprosy of Naaman. 1-7: Neither the name of the king of Syria nor that of the king of Israel is mentioned. The story assumes that the Syrians held the upper hand at this time. The value of ten talents of silver, plus six thousand shekels of gold, has been estimated to be as high as \$80,000. 14: For another description of the disease of leprosy, compare Lev

have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

¹⁵ Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him; and he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant." ¹⁶ But he said, "As the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will receive none." And he urged him to take it, but he refused. ¹⁷ Then Na'aman said, "If not, I pray you, let there be given to your servant two mules' burden of earth; for henceforth your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD." ¹⁸ In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter." ¹⁹ He said to him, "Go in peace."

But when Na'aman had gone from him a short distance, ²⁰ Geha'zi, the servant of Eli'sha the man of God, said, "See, my master has spared this Na'aman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him, and get something from him." ²¹ So Geha'zi followed Na'aman. And when Na'aman saw some one running after him, he alighted from the chariot to meet him, and said, "Is all well?" ²² And he said, "All is well. My mas-

ter has sent me to say, 'There have just now come to me from the hill country of E'phraim two young men of the sons of the prophets; pray, give them a talent of silver and two festal garments.'" ²³ And Na'aman said, "Be pleased to accept two talents." And he urged him, and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two festal garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they carried them before Geha'zi. ²⁴ And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand, and put them in the house; and he sent the men away, and they departed. ²⁵ He went in, and stood before his master, and Eli'sha said to him, "Where have you been, Geha'zi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere." ²⁶ But he said to him, "Did I not go with you in spirit when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, menservants and maidservants?" ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Na'aman shall cleave to you, and to your descendants for ever." So he went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow.

6 Now the sons of the prophets said to Eli'sha, "See, the place where we dwell under your charge is too small for us. ² Let us go to the Jordan and each of us get there a log, and let us make a place for us to dwell there." And he answered, "Go." ³ Then one of them said, "Be pleased to go with your servants." And he answered, "I will go." ⁴ So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. ⁵ But as one was felling a log, his axe head fell into the water; and he cried out, "Alas, my

ch. 13. The New Testament has a number of examples of the healing of this disease (Mt.8.2-3; Mk.1.40-42; Lk.5.12-13; compare Mt.11.5; Lk.7.22). **15-19a:** Naaman would have preferred to worship the LORD alone thenceforth if that would have been possible. He asked to take home *two mules' burden of earth* from Israel, the idea being that a god could not be worshiped apart from his own land. If he should bow down to *Rimmon* (another name for Hadad, the chief god of Syria), it would only be because he was forced to do so. **26:** Elisha caught the culprit by extrasensory perception (*in spirit*). This trait comes out more strongly in the next chapter. **27:** For another case of *leprosy* as punishment, compare 15.4-5.

6.1-7: The iron axe head. See 4.1-8.6 n.

master! It was borrowed.”⁶ Then the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick, and threw it in there, and made the iron float.⁷ And he said, “Take it up.” So he reached out his hand and took it.

8 Once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, “At such and such a place shall be my camp.”⁹ But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel, “Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are going down there.”¹⁰ And the king of Israel sent to the place of which the man of God told him. Thus he used to warn him, so that he saved himself there more than once or twice.

11 And the mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled because of this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, “Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?”¹² And one of his servants said, “None, my lord, O king; but Eli’sha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedchamber.”¹³ And he said, “Go and see where he is, that I may send and seize him.” It was told him, “Behold, he is in Dothan.”¹⁴ So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army; and they came by night, and surrounded the city.

15 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was round about the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?”¹⁶ He said, “Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with

them.”¹⁷ Then Eli’sha prayed, and said, “O LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see.” So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Eli’sha.¹⁸ And when the Syrians came down against him, Eli’sha prayed to the LORD, and said, “Strike this people, I pray thee, with blindness.” So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Eli’sha.¹⁹ And Eli’sha said to them, “This is not the way, and this is not the city; follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.” And he led them to Sama’ria.

20 As soon as they entered Sama’ria, Eli’sha said, “O LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.” So the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and lo, they were in the midst of Sama’ria.²¹ When the king of Israel saw them he said to Eli’sha, “My father, shall I slay them? Shall I slay them?”²² He answered, “You shall not slay them. Would you slay those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.”²³ So he prepared for them a great feast; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the Syrians came no more on raids into the land of Israel.

24 Afterward Ben-ha’dad king of Syria mustered his entire army, and went up, and besieged Sama’ria.²⁵ And there was a great famine in Sama’ria, as they besieged it, until an ass’s head was sold for eighty shekels

6.8–23: The Syrian army blinded and captured. As in 5.1–7 neither the king of Syria nor the king of Israel is named. Verses 8–14 portray Elisha’s extraordinary skill in the use of extrasensory perception. **10:** The meaning is that the king of Israel sent someone else to investigate. Dothan (v. 14) was about ten miles north of Samaria (v. 19). **17:** The horses and chariots of fire remind one of the stories about Elijah (2.11; 1 Kg.18.38). **23:** The Syrians were either so pleased by the hospitality of the king or so frightened by the power of the prophet that they gave up the war momentarily.

6.24–7.20: Ben-hadad’s siege of Samaria repulsed by divine intervention. **24:** The mention of the name of the king of Syria does not establish the chronology, since there were probably two Ben-hadads during these times, and the name of the king of Israel is not mentioned. **25:** These

of silver, and the fourth part of a kab of dove's dung for five shekels of silver.

²⁶ Now as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" ²⁷ And he said, "If the LORD will not help you, whence shall I help you? From the threshing floor, or from the wine press?" ²⁸ And the king asked her, "What is your trouble?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' ²⁹ So we boiled my son, and ate him. And on the next day I said to her, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son." ³⁰ When the king heard the words of the woman he rent his clothes—now he was passing by upon the wall—and the people looked, and behold, he had sackcloth beneath upon his body— ³¹ and he said, "May God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Eli'sha the son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today."

³² Eli'sha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. Now the king had dispatched a man from his presence; but before the messenger arrived Eli'sha said to the elders, "Do you see how this murderer has sent to take off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold the door fast against him. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" ³³ And while he was still speaking with them, the king came down to him and said, "This trouble is from the LORD! Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

⁷ ¹ But Eli'sha said, "Hear the word of the LORD: thus says the LORD, Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine meal shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a

shekel, at the gate of Sama'ria." ² Then the captain on whose hand the king leaned said to the man of God, "If the LORD himself should make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" But he said, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

³ Now there were four men who were lepers at the entrance to the gate; and they said to one another, "Why do we sit here till we die? ⁴ If we say, 'Let us enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit here, we die also. So now come, let us go over to the camp of the Syrians; if they spare our lives we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die." ⁵ So they arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; but when they came to the edge of the camp of the Syrians, behold, there was no one there. ⁶ For the Lord had made the army of the Syrians hear the sound of chariots, and of horses, the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, "Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to come upon us." ⁷ So they fled away in the twilight and forsook their tents, their horses, and their asses, leaving the camp as it was, and fled for their lives. ⁸ And when these lepers came to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent, and ate and drank, and they carried off silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back, and entered another tent, and carried off things from it, and went and hid them.

⁹ Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news; if we are silent and wait until the morning light,

f See 7.2: Heb messenger

prices were enormously high. A *shekel* was roughly fifty cents, a *kab* about a quart. **28-29:** See Dt.28.54-57; Lam.2.20; 4.10; Ezek.5.10. **31:** For some unknown reason, the king blamed *Elisha*, although in vv. 8-23 king and prophet were on the best of terms. **6.32-7.2:** Elisha predicted a quick reversal of fortune; a *captain* doubted and his doom was predicted by the prophet. **3-8:** The lepers do not seem to be overly ill from their disease. It is the LORD alone who routs the enemy; no fighting is recorded. The word here translated *Egypt* probably refers to a small country to the north, in the same general area as *the Hittites* (likewise in 1 Kg.10.28-29).

punishment will overtake us; now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household." ¹⁰ So they came and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, "We came to the camp of the Syrians, and behold, there was no one to be seen or heard there, nothing but the horses tied, and the asses tied, and the tents as they were."

¹¹ Then the gatekeepers called out, and it was told within the king's household. ¹² And the king rose in the night, and said to his servants, "I will tell you what the Syrians have prepared against us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the open country, thinking, 'When they come out of the city, we shall take them alive and get into the city.'" ¹³ And one of his servants said, "Let some men take five of the remaining horses, seeing that those who are left here will fare like the whole multitude of Israel that have already perished; let us send and see." ¹⁴ So they took two mounted men, and the king sent them after the army of the Syrians, saying, "Go and see." ¹⁵ So they went after them as far as the Jordan; and, lo, all the way was littered with garments and equipment which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

¹⁶ Then the people went out, and plundered the camp of the Syrians. So a measure of fine meal was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. ¹⁷ Now the king had appointed the captain on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate; and the people trod upon him in the gate, so that he died, as the man of God had said when the king came down to him. ¹⁸ For when the man of God had said to the king, "Two measures of barley

shall be sold for a shekel, and a measure of fine meal for a shekel, about this time tomorrow in the gate of Sama'ria," ¹⁹ the captain had answered the man of God, "If the LORD himself should make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?" And he had said, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it." ²⁰ And so it happened to him, for the people trod upon him in the gate and he died.

8 Now Eli'sha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, "Arise, and depart with your household, and sojourn wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine, and it will come upon the land for seven years." ² So the woman arose, and did according to the word of the man of God; she went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. ³ And at the end of the seven years, when the woman returned from the land of the Philistines, she went forth to appeal to the king for her house and her land. ⁴ Now the king was talking with Geha'zi the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me all the great things that Eli'sha has done." ⁵ And while he was telling the king how Eli'sha had restored the dead to life, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life appealed to the king for her house and her land. And Geha'zi said, "My lord, O king, here is the woman, and here is her son whom Eli'sha restored to life." ⁶ And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed an official for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, together with all the produce of the fields from the day that she left the land until now."

⁷ Now Eli'sha came to Damascus. Ben-ha'dad the king of Syria was sick;

8.1-6: Elisha again helps the woman whose child he had saved. This section is a continuation of 4.8-37. **1-2:** Isaac also went to the land of the Philistines to avoid a famine (Gen.26.1); compare Gen.12.10, where the place of refuge is Egypt. Drought and famine were common (4.38; 1 Kg.17.1). **3:** Apparently the caretakers were trying to usurp the property. **4:** The leprosy of Gehazi (5.27) is ignored here. Perhaps it was a mild case (7.3,8), or perhaps the tradition from which this story comes knew nothing of it.

and when it was told him, "The man of God has come here," ⁸ the king said to Haz'ael, "Take a present with you and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD through him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this sickness?'" ⁹ So Haz'ael went to meet him, and took a present with him, all kinds of goods of Damascus, forty camel loads. When he came and stood before him, he said, "Your son Ben-ha'dad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this sickness?'" ¹⁰ And Eli'sha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover'; but the LORD has shown me that he shall certainly die." ¹¹ And he fixed his gaze and stared at him, until he was ashamed. And the man of God wept. ¹² And Haz'ael said, "Why does my lord weep?" He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the people of Israel; you will set on fire their fortresses, and you will slay their young men with the sword, and dash in pieces their little ones, and rip up their women with child." ¹³ And Haz'ael said, "What is your servant, who is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Eli'sha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you are to be king over Syria." ¹⁴ Then he departed from Eli'sha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Eli'sha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me that you would certainly recover." ¹⁵ But on the morrow he took the coverlet and dipped it in water and spread it over

his face, till he died. And Haz'ael became king in his stead.

¹⁶ In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, ⁸ Jeho'ram the son of Jehosh'aphat, king of Judah, began to reign. ¹⁷ He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹⁹ Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons for ever.

²⁰ In his days Edom revolted from the rule of Judah, and set up a king of their own. ²¹ Then Joram passed over to Za'ir with all his chariots, and rose by night, and he and his chariot commanders smote the E'domites who had surrounded him; but his army fled home. ²² So Edom revolted from the rule of Judah to this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time. ²³ Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁴ So Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Ahazi'ah his son reigned in his stead.

²⁵ In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahazi'ah the son of Jeho'ram, king of Judah, began to reign. ²⁶ Ahazi'ah was twenty-

g Gk Syr: Heb Israel, Jehoshaphat being king of Judah

8.7-15: Elisha foments revolution in Syria. Elijah was able to carry out only one (the third) of the three commands of the "still small voice" at Horeb (1 Kg.19.15-16). *Elisha* now proceeds to carry out the first command of the "voice." The idea behind this is that Israel needed to be punished for its sins, and that Hazeel was divinely ordained to do this work. The prophet was sorrowful over this doleful necessity (vv. 11-12), but nevertheless felt that God's will must be done (compare Hos.13.16).

8.16-24: The reign of Jehoram (Joram) of Judah. ¹⁶: This synchronism with *Joram* (Jehoram) of *Israel* agrees with that in 3.1, not with that in 1.17 (see 3.1-3 n.). ¹⁸: See 1 Kg.22.1-4 n. The adverse moral evaluation of the Deuteronomist is probably owing to the marriage. ¹⁹: On the *lamp* as a symbol of the permanence of the Davidic dynasty, see 2 Sam.21.17; 1 Kg.11.36; 15.4. ²⁰: See 3.9-12 n.

8.25-29: The reign of Ahaziah of Judah. This *Ahaziah* must not be confused with his uncle, Ahaziah of Israel (1.2-18; 1 Kg.22.40,51-53). His relationship to *the house of Ahab* was enough to condemn him in the eyes of the editor. The term *son-in-law* (v. 27) would apply more accurately to Ahaziah's father. Ahaziah himself was actually related by blood to *the house of Ahab*

two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athali'ah; she was a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. ²⁷ He also walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab.

²⁸ He went with Joram the son of Ahab to make war against Haz'ael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead, where the Syrians wounded Joram. ²⁹ And King Joram returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Haz'ael king of Syria. And Ahazi'ah the son of Jeho'ram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

¶ Then Eli'sha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, "Gird up your loins, and take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead. ² And when you arrive, look there for Jehu the son of Jehosh'aphat, son of Nimshi; and go in and bid him rise from among his fellows, and lead him to an inner chamber. ³ Then take the flask of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LORD, I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee; do not tarry."

⁴ So the young man, the prophet,^h went to Ramoth-gilead. ⁵ And when he came, behold, the commanders of the army were in council; and he said, "I have an errand to you, O commander." And Jehu said, "To which of us all?" And he said, "To you, O commander." ⁶ So he arose, and went into the house; and the young man poured the oil on his head, saying to him, "Thus says the LORD the God of Israel, I anoint you king over the people of the

LORD, over Israel. ⁷ And you shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge on Jez'ebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD. ⁸ For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel. ⁹ And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, and like the house of Ba'asha the son of Ahi'jah. ¹⁰ And the dogs shall eat Jez'ebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her." Then he opened the door, and fled.

¹¹ When Jehu came out to the servants of his master, they said to him, "Is all well? Why did this mad fellow come to you?" And he said to them, "You know the fellow and his talk." ¹² And they said, "That is not true; tell us now." And he said, "Thus and so he spoke to me, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, I anoint you king over Israel.'" ¹³ Then in haste every man of them took his garment, and put it under him on the bareⁱ steps, and they blew the trumpet, and proclaimed, "Jehu is king."

¹⁴ Thus Jehu the son of Jehosh'aphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram with all Israel had been on guard at Ramoth-gilead against Haz'ael king of Syria; ¹⁵ but King Joram had returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Haz'ael king of Syria.) So Jehu said, "If this is your mind, then let no one slip out of the city to go and tell the news in Jezreel." ¹⁶ Then Jehu mounted his chariot, and went to Jezreel, for Joram lay there. And Ahazi'ah king of Judah had come down to visit Joram.

^h Gk Syr: Heb *the young man, the young man, the prophet*
ⁱ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

Ramoth-gilead, see 1 Kg.22.29-36. Like *Ahab*, *Joram* sought help from the *king of Judah*. The visit of *Ahaziah* to *Joram* set the stage for the catastrophic events of the next chapter. (*Ramah* is the same as *Ramoth-gilead*.)

9.1-37: Elisha foments the revolution of Jehu; assassination of Joram, Ahaziah, and Jezebel. Elisha now proceeds to carry out the second and only unfulfilled command of the "still small voice" at Horeb (see 8.7-15 n.). **16:** Compare 8.29. *Jezreel*, see 1 Kg.18.41-46 n. **26:** Compare

17 Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, "I see a company." And Joram said, "Take a horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?'" ¹⁸ So a man on horseback went to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king, 'Is it peace?'" And Jehu said, "What have you to do with peace? Turn round and ride behind me." And the watchman reported, saying, "The messenger reached them, but he is not coming back." ¹⁹ Then he sent out a second horseman, who came to them, and said, "Thus the king has said, 'Is it peace?'" And Jehu answered, "What have you to do with peace? Turn round and ride behind me." ²⁰ Again the watchman reported, "He reached them, but he is not coming back. And the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he drives furiously."

21 Joram said, "Make ready." And they made ready his chariot. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahazi'ah king of Judah set out, each in his chariot, and went to meet Jehu, and met him at the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. ²² And when Joram saw Jehu, he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" He answered, "What peace can there be, so long as the harlotries and the sorceries of your mother Jez'ebel are so many?" ²³ Then Joram reined about and fled, saying to Ahazi'ah, "Treachery, O Ahazi'ah!" ²⁴ And Jehu drew his bow with his full strength, and shot Joram between the shoulders, so that the arrow pierced his heart, and he sank in his chariot. ²⁵ Jehu said to Bidkar his aide, "Take him up, and cast him on the plot of ground belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I rode side by side behind Ahab his father, how the LORD uttered this oracle against him: ²⁶ 'As surely as I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the

blood of his sons—says the LORD—I will requite you on this plot of ground.' Now therefore take him up and cast him on the plot of ground, in accordance with the word of the LORD."

27 When Ahazi'ah the king of Judah saw this, he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan. And Jehu pursued him, and said, "Shoot him also"; and they shot him¹ in the chariot at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megid'do, and died there. ²⁸ His servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the city of David.

29 In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab, Ahazi'ah began to reign over Judah.

30 When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jez'ebel heard of it; and she painted her eyes, and adorned her head, and looked out of the window. ³¹ And as Jehu entered the gate, she said, "Is it peace, you Zimri, murderer of your master?" ³² And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked out at him. ³³ He said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down; and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled on her. ³⁴ Then he went in and ate and drank; and he said, "See now to this cursed woman, and bury her; for she is a king's daughter." ³⁵ But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ When they came back and told him, he said, "This is the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Eli'jah the Tishbite, 'In the territory of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jez'ebel; ³⁷ and the corpse of Jez'ebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, This is Jez'ebel.'"

J Syr Vg Compare Gk: Heb lacks and they shot him

1 Kg.21.17-19,28-29. ²⁹: This verse may be a correction of 8.25. ³¹: Zimri was infamous for his brutal assassinations (1 Kg.16.8-12). ³⁷: The editor adds this verse to the oracle in 1 Kg. 21.23.

10 Now Ahab had seventy sons in Sama'ria. So Jehu wrote letters, and sent them to Sama'ria, to the rulers of the city,^k to the elders, and to the guardians of the sons of Ahab, saying,² "Now then, as soon as this letter comes to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, fortified cities also, and weapons,³ select the best and fittest of your master's sons and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house." ⁴ But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Behold, the two kings could not stand before him; how then can we stand?" ⁵ So he who was over the palace, and he who was over the city, together with the elders and the guardians, sent to Jehu, saying, "We are your servants, and we will do all that you bid us. We will not make any one king; do whatever is good in your eyes." ⁶ Then he wrote to them a second letter, saying, "If you are on my side, and if you are ready to obey me, take the heads of your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel tomorrow at this time." Now the king's sons, seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, who were bringing them up. ⁷ And when the letter came to them, they took the king's sons, and slew them, seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent them to him at Jezreel. ⁸ When the messenger came and told him, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons," he said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until the morning." ⁹ Then in the morning, when he went out, he stood, and said to all the people, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master, and slew him; but who struck down all these?" ¹⁰ Know then that there shall

fall to the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what he said by his servant Eli'jah." ¹¹ So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his great men, and his familiar friends, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

¹² Then he set out and went to Sama'ria. On the way, when he was at Beth-eked of the Shepherds, ¹³ Jehu met the kinsmen of Ahazi'ah king of Judah, and he said, "Who are you?" And they answered, "We are the kinsmen of Ahazi'ah, and we came down to visit the royal princes and the sons of the queen mother." ¹⁴ He said, "Take them alive." And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of Beth-eked, forty-two persons, and he spared none of them.

¹⁵ And when he departed from there, he met Jehon'adab the son of Rechab coming to meet him; and he greeted him, and said to him, "Is your heart true to my heart as mine is to yours?" And Jehon'adab answered, "It is." Jehu said,^m "If it is, give me your hand." So he gave him his hand. And Jehu took him up with him into the chariot. ¹⁶ And he said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD." So heⁿ had him ride in his chariot. ¹⁷ And when he came to Sama'ria, he slew all that remained to Ahab in Sama'ria, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the LORD which he spoke to Eli'jah.

¹⁸ Then Jehu assembled all the people, and said to them, "Ahab served

^k Gk Vg: Heb *Jezreel*

^l Gk: Heb *Is it right with your heart, as my heart is with your heart?*

^m Gk: Heb *lacks Jehu said*

ⁿ Gk Syr Tg: Heb *they*

10.1-36: Continuation of the purge; massacre of the princes of Israel, the princes of Judah, and the worshipers of Baal; decline of the power of Israel. **1:** *Seventy sons* probably includes grandsons (compare, however, Jg.8.30; 9.5; 12.13). **10-11:** Compare 1 Kg.21.21. **15:** *Jehonadab* (or *Jonadab*) the son of *Rechab* was the leader of that group, called the Rechabites, which fiercely maintained the old desert way of life, believing that only thus could they properly worship the LORD (1 Chr.2.55; Jer. ch. 35). The Nazirites were of similar type, though they practiced as individuals (Jg.13.4-5; Am.2.11-12; Num.6.1-21). **18-27:** In slaughtering *the prophets of Baal*, with his priests and worshipers, Jehu was following in the footsteps of Elijah (compare

Ba'al a little; but Jehu will serve him much. ¹⁹ Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Ba'al, all his worshippers and all his priests; let none be missing, for I have a great sacrifice to offer to Ba'al; whoever is missing shall not live." But Jehu did it with cunning in order to destroy the worshippers of Ba'al. ²⁰ And Jehu ordered, "Sanctify a solemn assembly for Ba'al." So they proclaimed it. ²¹ And Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshippers of Ba'al came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. And they entered the house of Ba'al, and the house of Ba'al was filled from one end to the other. ²² He said to him who was in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out the vestments for all the worshippers of Ba'al." So he brought out the vestments for them. ²³ Then Jehu went into the house of Ba'al with Jehon'adab the son of Rechab; and he said to the worshippers of Ba'al, "Search, and see that there is no servant of the LORD here among you, but only the worshippers of Ba'al." ²⁴ Then he^o went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.

Now Jehu had stationed eighty men outside, and said, "The man who allows any of those whom I give into your hands to escape shall forfeit his life." ²⁵ So as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, Jehu said to the guard and to the officers, "Go in and slay them; let not a man escape." So when they put them to the sword, the guard and the officers cast them out and went into the inner room^p of the house of Ba'al ²⁶ and they brought out the pillar that was in the house of Ba'al, and burned it. ²⁷ And they demolished the pillar of Ba'al, and demol-

ished the house of Ba'al, and made it a latrine to this day.

²⁸ Thus Jehu wiped out Ba'al from Israel. ²⁹ But Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and in Dan. ³⁰ And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in my eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." ³¹ But Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the LORD the God of Israel with all his heart; he did not turn from the sins of Jerobo'am, which he made Israel to sin.

³² In those days the LORD began to cut off parts of Israel. Haz'ael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel: ³³ from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manas'sites, from Aro'er, which is by the valley of the Arnon, that is, Gilead and Bashan. ³⁴ Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ³⁵ So Jehu slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Sama'ria. And Jeho'ahaz his son reigned in his stead. ³⁶ The time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Sama'ria was twenty-eight years.

|| Now when Athali'ah the mother of Ahazi'ah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal family. ² But Jehosh'eba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of

^o Gk Compare verse 25: Heb *they*
^p Cn: Heb *city*

v. 25 with 1 Kg.18.40). **28-31:** The verses belong to the "framework" (see Introduction to 1 Kings). A later prophet condemns this butchery by Jehu (Hos.1.4-5). **32-36:** On the successes of Hazael against the territory of Israel, see the prediction in 8.12. After the death of so many leaders, the defensive position of Israel was naturally weakened. It was probably during this time that Moab, south of the Arnon, also attacked Israel again and won final freedom from vassalage, as related on the Moabite Stone (see 3.4-8 n.).

11.1-20: The usurpation of Athaliah in Judah, the revolt against her, and the coronation of Joash (Jehoash). Jehu's attempt to eliminate the family of Ahab and the worship of Baal from Israel resulted in the temporary seizure of the throne of Judah by one who was both a descendant of Ahab and a worshiper of Baal (v. 18). **2-3:** *Jehosheba* was not a daughter of Atha-

Ahazi'ah, took Jo'ash the son of Ahazi'ah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were about to be slain, and she put^q him and his nurse in a bedchamber. Thus she hid him from Athali'ah, so that he was not slain; ³ and he remained with her six years, hid in the house of the LORD, while Athali'ah reigned over the land.

4 But in the seventh year Jehoi'ada sent and brought the captains of the Carites and of the guards, and had them come to him in the house of the LORD; and he made a covenant with them and put them under oath in the house of the LORD, and he showed them the king's son. ⁵ And he commanded them, "This is the thing that you shall do: one third of you, those who come off duty on the sabbath and guard the king's house ⁶ (another third being at the gate Sur and a third at the gate behind the guards), shall guard the palace; ⁷ and the two divisions of you, which come on duty in force on the sabbath and guard the house of the LORD,^s ⁸ shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; and whoever approaches the ranks is to be slain. Be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in."

9 The captains did according to all that Jehoi'ada the priest commanded, and each brought his men who were to go off duty on the sabbath, with those who were to come on duty on the sabbath, and came to Jehoi'ada the priest. ¹⁰ And the priest delivered to the captains the spears and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of the LORD; ¹¹ and the guards stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the

house.^t ¹² Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they proclaimed him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, "Long live the king!"

13 When Athali'ah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she went into the house of the LORD to the people; ¹⁴ and when she looked, there was the king standing by the pillar, according to the custom, and the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets. And Athali'ah rent her clothes, and cried, "Treason! Treason!" ¹⁵ Then Jehoi'ada the priest commanded the captains who were set over the army, "Bring her out between the ranks; and slay with the sword any one who follows her." For the priest said, "Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD." ¹⁶ So they laid hands on her; and she went through the horses' entrance to the king's house, and there she was slain.

17 And Jehoi'ada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people, that they should be the LORD's people; and also between the king and the people. ¹⁸ Then all the people of the land went to the house of Ba'al, and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces, and they slew Mattan the priest of Ba'al before the altars. And the priest posted watchmen over the house of the LORD. ¹⁹ And he took the captains, the Carites, the guards, and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, marching through the gate of the guards

q With 2 Chr 22.11: Heb lacks and she put
r Gk Syr Vg Compare 2 Chr 22.11: Heb they
s Heb the LORD to the king
t Heb the house to the king

liah; hence she was only a half sister of Ahaziah. According to 2 Chr.22.11 she was the wife of Jehoiada the priest (vv. 4,9). Joash (Jehoash, 12.1) was the grandson of Athaliah as well as of King Joram; but while he was hid in the house of the LORD, he was taught the ways of the LORD. 4: The revolt was led by Jehoiada, the priest of the LORD (v. 9). The Carites were mercenaries; the word may be only an error for Cherethites (see 1 Sam.30.14 n.; 2 Sam.8.16-18 n.). 12: The word *testimony* may refer to a book or document; or it may be an error for "armlet," a royal symbol in 2 Sam.1.10. 14: The pillar (before the temple), see 1 Kg.7.15-22 n. The people of the land were the common people, who had remained loyal to the LORD.

to the king's house. And he took his seat on the throne of the kings. ²⁰ So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet after Athali'ah had been slain with the sword at the king's house.

21^u Jeho'ash was seven years old when he began to reign.

12 In the seventh year of Jehu Jeho'-ash began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zib'iah of Beer-sheba. ² And Jeho'ash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all his days, because Jehoi'ada the priest instructed him. ³ Nevertheless the high places were not taken away; the people continued to sacrifice and burn incense on the high places.

4 Jeho'ash said to the priests, "All the money of the holy things which is brought into the house of the LORD, the money for which each man is assessed—the money from the assessment of persons—and the money which a man's heart prompts him to bring into the house of the LORD, ⁵ let the priests take, each from his acquaintance; and let them repair the house wherever any need of repairs is discovered." ⁶ But by the twenty-third year of King Jeho'-ash the priests had made no repairs on the house. ⁷ Therefore King Jeho'ash summoned Jehoi'ada the priest and the other priests and said to them, "Why are you not repairing the house? Now therefore take no more money from your acquaintances, but hand it over for the repair of the house." ⁸ So the priests agreed that they should take no more money from the people, and that they should not repair the house.

9 Then Jehoi'ada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it,

and set it beside the altar on the right side as one entered the house of the LORD; and the priests who guarded the threshold put in it all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD. ¹⁰ And whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, the king's secretary and the high priest came up and they counted and tied up in bags the money that was found in the house of the LORD. ¹¹ Then they would give the money that was weighed out into the hands of the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they paid it out to the carpenters and the builders who worked upon the house of the LORD, ¹² and to the masons and the stonecutters, as well as to buy timber and quarried stone for making repairs on the house of the LORD, and for any outlay upon the repairs of the house. ¹³ But there were not made for the house of the LORD basins of silver, snuffers, bowls, trumpets, or any vessels of gold, or of silver, from the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, ¹⁴ for that was given to the workmen who were repairing the house of the LORD with it. ¹⁵ And they did not ask an accounting from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to pay out to the workmen, for they dealt honestly. ¹⁶ The money from the guilt offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD; it belonged to the priests.

17 At that time Haz'ael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it. But when Haz'ael set his face to go up against Jerusalem, ¹⁸ Jeho'ash king of Judah took all the votive gifts that Jehosh'aphat and Je-

^u Ch 12.1 in Heb

12.1–21: Reign of Jehoash of Judah; difficulties with repairs to the temple; attack by the Syrians; assassination of Jehoash. 1–3: During the childhood of the king, *Jehoiada the priest instructed him*, being no doubt the real power behind the throne. **4–8:** According to the early source reflected in these verses, the controversy over the repair of the temple was the fault of the priests rather than of the king. The identity of the *acquaintances* (vv. 5,7) is not clear. **9–16:** A new method of collection resulted in enough funds for repairs, but not enough for replacement of the valuable furnishings probably lost during Athaliah's regime (2 Chr.24.7). *Jehoiada* might properly be called "chief priest," but the term *high priest* is post-exilic and here editorial. For a story about apostasy on the part of Joash, and his assassination of Jehoiada's

ho'ram and Ahazi'ah, his fathers, the kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own votive gifts, and all the gold that was found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent these to Haz'ael king of Syria. Then Haz'ael went away from Jerusalem.

19 Now the rest of the acts of Jo'ash, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁰ His servants arose and made a conspiracy, and slew Jo'ash in the house of Millo, on the way that goes down to Silla. ²¹ It was Jo'zacar the son of Shim'e-ath and Jeho'zabad the son of Shomer, his servants, who struck him down, so that he died. And they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Amazi'ah his son reigned in his stead.

13 In the twenty-third year of Jo'ash the son of Ahazi'ah, king of Judah, Jeho'ahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Sama'ria, and he reigned seventeen years. ² He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from them. ³ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them continually into the hand of Haz'ael king of Syria and into the hand of Ben-ha'dad the son of Haz'ael. ⁴ Then Jeho'ahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened to him; for he saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of Syria oppressed them. ⁵ (Therefore the LORD gave Israel a savior, so that they escaped from the hand of the Syrians; and the people of Israel dwelt in their homes as formerly. ⁶ Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jerobo'am, which he made Israel to sin, but walked

in them; and the Ashe'rah also remained in Sama'ria.) ⁷ For there was not left to Jeho'ahaz an army of more than fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing. ⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jeho'ahaz and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ⁹ So Jeho'ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Sama'ria; and Jo'ash his son reigned in his stead.

10 In the thirty-seventh year of Jo'ash king of Judah Jeho'ash the son of Jeho'ahaz began to reign over Israel in Sama'ria, and he reigned sixteen years. ¹¹ He also did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, but he walked in them. ¹² Now the rest of the acts of Jo'ash, and all that he did, and the might with which he fought against Amazi'ah king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ¹³ So Jo'ash slept with his fathers, and Jerobo'am sat upon his throne; and Jo'ash was buried in Sama'ria with the kings of Israel.

14 Now when Eli'sha had fallen sick with the illness of which he was to die, Jo'ash king of Israel went down to him, and wept before him, crying, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" ¹⁵ And Eli'sha said to him, "Take a bow and arrows"; so he took a bow and arrows. ¹⁶ Then he said to the king of Israel, "Draw the bow"; and he drew it. And Eli'sha laid his hands upon the king's hands. ¹⁷ And he said, "Open the window eastward"; and he opened it. Then

v Gk Syr Tg Vg: Heb *he walked*

son, see 2 Chr.24.17-22. **19-21:** According to 2 Chr.24.23-27, *Joash* (Jehoash) was defeated and assassinated because of his apostasy. In the end he turned out to be a true grandson of Athaliah (see 11.2-3 n.).

13.1-25: The reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoash of Israel; the death of Elisha. **3:** Compare 8.12. **4-5:** Compare the "framework" of Judges (see Introduction to Judges). **6:** *The Asherah*, here a symbol of the goddess (see 1 Kg.14.15 n.; 18.17-19 n.). **13:** This Jeroboam is Jeroboam II, to be distinguished from Jeroboam I mentioned in v. 11. **14:** Note the friendly relations between

Eli'sha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The LORD's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria! For you shall fight the Syrians in Aphek until you have made an end of them."¹⁸ And he said, "Take the arrows"; and he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground with them"; and he struck three times, and stopped.¹⁹ Then the man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck down Syria until you had made an end of it, but now you will strike down Syria only three times."

20 So Eli'sha died, and they buried him. Now bands of Moabites used to invade the land in the spring of the year.²¹ And as a man was being buried, lo, a marauding band was seen and the man was cast into the grave of Eli'sha; and as soon as the man touched the bones of Eli'sha, he revived, and stood on his feet.

22 Now Haz'ael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jeho'ahaz.²³ But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them; nor has he cast them from his presence until now.

24 When Haz'ael king of Syria died, Ben-ha'dad his son became king in his stead.²⁵ Then Jeho'ash the son of Jeho'ahaz took again from Ben-ha'dad the son of Haz'ael the cities which he

had taken from Jeho'ahaz his father in war. Three times Jo'ash defeated him and recovered the cities of Israel.

14 In the second year of Jo'ash the son of Jeho'ahaz, king of Israel, Amazi'ah the son of Jo'ash, king of Judah, began to reign.² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jeho-ad'din of Jerusalem.³ And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet not like David his father; he did in all things as Jo'ash his father had done.⁴ But the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.⁵ And as soon as the royal power was firmly in his hand he killed his servants who had slain the king his father.⁶ But he did not put to death the children of the murderers; according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses, where the LORD commanded, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, or the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin."

7 He killed ten thousand E'domites in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm, and called it Jok'the-el, which is its name to this day.

8 Then Amazi'ah sent messengers to Jeho'ash the son of Jeho'ahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face."

⁹ And Jeho'ash king of Israel sent word to Amazi'ah king of Judah, "A thistle on Lebanon sent to a cedar on Leb-

the prophet and the grandson of Jehu; on the words of Joash, see 2.12 n. **18:** The striking *three times* refers to the three victories in v. 25. **20-21:** On the miracle, see 4.1-8.6 n. **23:** A theological anticipation of vv. 24-25, added by an editor who, though friendly to Israel, yet knew that in the end the kingdom had fallen. **24-25:** This *Ben-hadad* (also in v. 3) is the third of that name, possibly the fourth, mentioned in these pages (compare 1 Kg.15.18-21; 20.1; 2 Kg.6.24; 8.7).

14.1-22: Warfare between Amaziah of Judah and Jehoash of Israel. **1:** The reigns of *Joash* (Jehoash) of Israel and *Joash* (Jehoash) of Judah overlapped by about two years. Compare the earlier overlapping and more nearly coincident reigns of the two brothers-in-law, Joram (Jehoram) of Israel and Joram (Jehoram) of Judah (see 1.17; 8.16,25—exhibiting two different chronological systems; see p. 1532). **6:** *The law*, Dt.24.16; compare Jer.31.29-30; Ezek.18.2-4, 20; earlier theory and practice may be seen from Ex.20.5; Dt.5.9-10; Jos.7.24-25; 1 Kg.21.21. **7:** *The Valley of Salt*, probably the depression south of the Dead Sea. On the relations between Judah and the *Edomites*, compare 8.20-22. **8-10:** See Jg.9.8-15. The analogy in the fable here should not be pressed in every detail. In general, the idea is that a miserable little *thistle* tried

anon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son for a wife'; and a wild beast of Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thistle. ¹⁰ You have indeed smitten Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Be content with your glory, and stay at home; for why should you provoke trouble so that you fall, you and Judah with you?"

¹¹ But Amazi'ah would not listen. So Jeho'ash king of Israel went up, and he and Amazi'ah king of Judah faced one another in battle at Beth-she'mesh, which belongs to Judah. ¹² And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his home. ¹³ And Jeho'ash king of Israel captured Amazi'ah king of Judah, the son of Jeho'ash, son of Ahazi'ah, at Beth-she'mesh, and came to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem for four hundred cubits, from the E'phraim Gate to the Corner Gate. ¹⁴ And he seized all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, also hostages, and he returned to Sama'ria.

¹⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jeho'-ash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amazi'ah king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ¹⁶ And Jeho'ash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Sama'ria with the kings of Israel; and Jerobo'am his son reigned in his stead.

¹⁷ Amazi'ah the son of Jo'ash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the

death of Jeho'ash son of Jeho'ahaz, king of Israel. ¹⁸ Now the rest of the deeds of Amazi'ah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ¹⁹ And they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. ²⁰ And they brought him upon horses; and he was buried in Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. ²¹ And all the people of Judah took Azari'ah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amazi'ah. ²² He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers.

²³ In the fifteenth year of Amazi'ah the son of Jo'ash, king of Judah, Jerobo'am the son of Jo'ash, king of Israel, began to reign in Sama'ria, and he reigned forty-one years. ²⁴ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin. ²⁵ He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amit'tai, the prophet, who was from Gath-he'pher. ²⁶ For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter, for there was none left, bond or free, and there was none to help Israel. ²⁷ But the LORD had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, so he saved them by

to make itself equal to a cedar, and was badly trampled for its trouble. *Jehoash* was both cedar and wild beast. ¹³: Four hundred cubits, about two hundred yards. *The Ephraim Gate* would naturally be in the north wall. *The Corner Gate* was probably near the northwest angle of the wall. ¹⁴: Compare 12.18. Apparently the captured king (v. 13) was released and *hostages* were taken instead. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶: These verses duplicate 13.12-13. ¹⁹: Perhaps Amaziah was assassinated by those resentful of the punishment he had meted out to his father's assassins (v. 5). ²¹: *Azariah*, also called *Uzziah* (2 Chr.26.1). ²²: The restoration of Elath as a seaport of Judah was possible because Edom had again been subdued (v. 7; see 8.20-22; 1 Kg.9.26-28; 22.47-50).

^{14.23-29}: The reign of Jeroboam II was long and prosperous. ²⁵: Jeroboam is here said to have ruled from the Dead Sea (*Sea of the Arabah*) as far north as Solomon's limit (1 Kg.8.65). His prophetic supporter was *Jonah the son of Amittai*, whose name was long afterwards given to the hero of the Book of Jonah (see Introduction to Jonah and Jon.1.1). ²⁶⁻²⁷: These verses show sympathy for Israel; perhaps they were written by the second Deuteronomist (see Introduction to 1 Kings and contrast v. 24). Contrast the attitudes of Amos (Am.7.11) and Hosea (Hos.1.4-5; 10.7,15; 13.16), who prophesied during the reign of *Jeroboam* (see Introductions

the hand of Jerobo'am the son of Jo'ash.

28 Now the rest of the acts of Jerobo'am, and all that he did, and his might, how he fought, and how he recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ²⁹ And Jerobo'am slept with his fathers, the kings of Israel, and Zechari'ah his son reigned in his stead.

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Jerobo'am king of Israel Azari'ah the son of Amazi'ah, king of Judah, began to reign. ² He was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoli'ah of Jerusalem. ³ And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Amazi'ah had done. ⁴ Nevertheless the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. ⁵ And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death, and he dwelt in a separate house. And Jotham the king's son was over the household, governing the people of the land. ⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Azari'ah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ⁷ And Azari'ah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

8 In the thirty-eighth year of Azari'ah king of Judah Zechari'ah the son

of Jerobo'am reigned over Israel in Sama'ria six months. ⁹ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done. He did not depart from the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin. ¹⁰ Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and struck him down at Ibleam,^w and killed him, and reigned in his stead. ¹¹ Now the rest of the deeds of Zechari'ah, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹² (This was the promise of the LORD which he gave to Jehu, "Your sons shall sit upon the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." And so it came to pass.)

13 Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Uzzi'ah king of Judah, and he reigned one month in Sama'ria. ¹⁴ Then Men'ahem the son of Gadi came up from Tirzah and came to Sama'ria, and he struck down Shallum the son of Jabesh in Sama'ria and slew him, and reigned in his stead. ¹⁵ Now the rest of the deeds of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁶ At that time Men'ahem sacked Tappuah^x and all who were in it and its territory from Tirzah on; because they did not open it to him, therefore he sacked it, and he ripped up all the women in it who were with child.

17 In the thirty-ninth year of Azari'ah king of Judah Men'ahem the son

^w Gk Compare 9:27: Heb *before the people*
^x Compare Gk: Heb *Tiphsh*

to Amos and Hosea). **28:** This verse has been badly damaged in transmission; we should read something like this: "how he fought with Damascus and how he averted the wrath of the LORD from Israel . . ."

15.1-7: The reign of Azariah (Uzziah) in Judah. The reign of Azariah (called Uzziah in vv. 13,30,32,34, and elsewhere) was long and prosperous, like that of Jeroboam II in Israel (see 14.23-24 and additional data in 2 Chr.26.6-15). **5:** Because *the king* became a leper, his son Jotham acted as regent (*was over the household*) during the latter years of the reign. **7:** On his death see Is.6.1. A limestone inscription found at Jerusalem bears the inscription: "Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah: not to be opened" (date 1st cent. A.D.).

15.8-31: The reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah in Israel. **8-12:** Zechariah was the last of the dynasty of Jehu (v. 12; compare 10.30). His assassination began a series of revolts and counter-revolts like those preceding the reign of Omri (1 Kg. ch. 16). **13-16:** Shallum was quickly murdered by Menahem. On the custom of disemboweling pregnant women, see 8.12; Hos.13.16; Am.1.13. **17-22:** Menahem's reign. Israel, tottering internally,

of Gadi began to reign over Israel, and he reigned ten years in Sama'ria.

¹⁸ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart all his days from all the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin. ¹⁹ Pul the king of Assyria came against the land; and Men'ahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that he might help him to confirm his hold of the royal power. ²⁰ Men'ahem exacted the money from Israel, that is, from all the wealthy men, fifty shekels of silver from every man, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land. ²¹ Now the rest of the deeds of Men'ahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

²² And Men'ahem slept with his fathers, and Pekahi'ah his son reigned in his stead.

²³ In the fiftieth year of Azari'ah king of Judah Pekahi'ah the son of Men'ahem began to reign over Israel in Sama'ria, and he reigned two years.

²⁴ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not turn away from the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

²⁵ And Pekah the son of Remali'ah, his captain, conspired against him with fifty men of the Gileadites, and slew him in Sama'ria, in the citadel of the king's house;^y he slew him, and reigned in his stead. ²⁶ Now the rest of the

deeds of Pekahi'ah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

²⁷ In the fifty-second year of Azari'ah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remali'ah began to reign over Israel in Sama'ria, and reigned twenty years.

²⁸ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

²⁹ In the days of Pekah king of Israel Tig'lath-pile'ser king of Assyria came and captured I'jon, A'bel-beth-ma'acah, Jan-o'ah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naph'tali; and he carried the people captive to Assyria. ³⁰ Then Hoshe'a the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remali'ah, and struck him down, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzzi'ah.

³¹ Now the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

³² In the second year of Pekah the son of Remali'ah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzzi'ah, king of Judah, began to reign. ³³ He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jeru'sha the daughter of Zadok.

^y Heb adds *Argob and Arieih*, which probably belong to the list of places in verse 29

was an easy prey to outside attack by a reviving Assyria. **19-20:** *Pul* was another name of Tiglath-pileser III, *king of Assyria*. Menahem was forced to pay a huge sum to be allowed to hold his throne (roughly, a silver talent is fifteen hundred dollars; a talent contains 3000 shekels; hence 60,000 *wealthy men* were each taxed *fifty shekels of silver*, about twenty-five dollars). The time was 738 B.C. Israel was henceforth a vassal state. **23-26:** Pekahiah's reign. **27-31:** Pekah's reign. **27:** The total of *twenty years* is much too long for the reign of Pekah (see 14.1 n.). **29:** A somewhat garbled list, containing first the names of certain towns, followed by three names of larger areas: *Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali*. Two or three lists may have been combined. In any case, all the names belong to the northern part of the country, which was ravaged by Tiglath-pileser in his campaigns of 733-732 B.C., when he punished Pekah for anti-Assyrian plotting (v. 37; 16.5,7-8) and also put an end to the kingdom of Syria (Aram) by capturing Damascus (16.9). We notice the beginning of Israelite deportation in this verse (compare 17.6). **30:** Tiglath-pileser in his own "Annals" claims to have had a hand in the overthrow of Pekah by Hoshea. Thus Hoshea began with a pro-Assyrian policy.

15.32-38: The reign of Jotham in Judah. For further details of his reign, see 2 Chr.27.1-9. **37:** The idea of this attack was to force Judah to join a coalition against Assyria (see v. 29 n. and 16.5-9).

³⁴ And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzzi'ah had done. ³⁵ Nevertheless the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the upper gate of the house of the LORD. ³⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ³⁷ In those days the LORD began to send Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remali'ah against Judah. ³⁸ Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remali'ah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. ² Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God, as his father David had done, ³ but he walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He even burned his son as an offering,^z according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. ⁴ And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

⁵ Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remali'ah, king of Israel, came up to wage war on Jerusalem, and they besieged Ahaz but could not conquer him. ⁶ At that time^a the-

king of Edom^b recovered Elath for Edom,^b and drove the men of Judah from Elath; and the E'domites came to Elath, where they dwell to this day. ⁷ So Ahaz sent messengers to Tig'lath-pile'-ser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up, and rescue me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me." ⁸ Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria. ⁹ And the king of Assyria hearkened to him; the king of Assyria marched up against Damascus, and took it, carrying its people captive to Kir, and he killed Rezin.

¹⁰ When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tig'lath-pile'-ser king of Assyria, he saw the altar that was at Damascus. And King Ahaz sent to Uri'ah the priest a model of the altar, and its pattern, exact in all its details. ¹¹ And Uri'ah the priest built the altar; in accordance with all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, so Uri'ah the priest made it, before King Ahaz arrived from Damascus. ¹² And when the king came from Damascus, the king viewed the altar. Then the king drew near to the altar, and went up on it, ¹³ and burned his burnt offering and his cereal offering, and poured his drink offering, and threw the blood of his peace offerings upon the altar. ¹⁴ And the bronze altar which was be-

^z Or made his son to pass through the fire
^a Heb At that time Rezin ^b Heb Aram (Syria)

16.1-20: The reign of Ahaz in Judah. 1-4: Ahaz is condemned as unusually bad by the Deuteronomic editor in comparison with other kings of Judah. Worst of all, he revived the barbarous custom of human sacrifice (see 3.27 n.). 5: See 15.37 n.; compare also Is.7.1-17; 8.1-8a. 6: Edom took advantage of the situation to throw off the control of Judah (see 14.22 n.). 7-9: Ahaz disregarded the advice of Isaiah (Is.7.4,16-17; 8.4-8a) and called on Tiglath-pileser for help, sending an enormous gift. The king of Assyria, glad to be paid for what he had intended to do anyhow, took Damascus and devastated Israel (see 15.29 n.). Kir was the place in Mesopotamia from which some of the Arameans (Syrians) had come originally (Am.1.5; 9.7). 10-16: Ahaz went to Damascus to pay homage to his overlord, the king of Assyria; while there he saw an altar, probably of Assyrian type, which he liked. He had this altar duplicated and placed before the temple in Jerusalem. Ahaz was probably thus paying his respects to a foreign religion, though the matter is not absolutely certain. Urijah the priest is probably the same person as the Uriah of Is.8.2, and hence could hardly have been wholly disloyal to the

fore the LORD he removed from the front of the house, from the place between his altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of his altar. ¹⁵ And King Ahaz commanded Uri'ah the priest, saying, "Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening cereal offering, and the king's burnt offering, and his cereal offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their cereal offering, and their drink offering; and throw upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice; but the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by." ¹⁶ Uri'ah the priest did all this, as King Ahaz commanded.

¹⁷ And King Ahaz cut off the frames of the stands, and removed the laver from them, and he took down the sea from off the bronze oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pediment of stone. ¹⁸ And the covered way for the sabbath which had been built inside the palace, and the outer entrance for the king he removed from the house of the LORD, because of the king of Assyria. ¹⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁰ And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Hezeki'ah his son reigned in his stead.

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah Hoshe'a the son of

Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel, and he reigned nine years. ² And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, yet not as the kings of Israel who were before him. ³ Against him came up Shalmane'ser king of Assyria; and Hoshe'a became his vassal, and paid him tribute. ⁴ But the king of Assyria found treachery in Hoshe'a; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. ⁵ Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria, and for three years he besieged it. ⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshe'a the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

⁷ And this was so, because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods ⁸ and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs which the kings of Israel had introduced. ⁹ And the people of Israel did secretly against the LORD their God things that were not right. They built for themselves high places at all their

c Cn: Heb turned to d Heb obscure

LORD. 17-18: It was necessary for Ahaz to dismantle some of the costly bronze equipment of the temple in order to pay the heavy tribute to Assyria. *The stands*, see 1 Kg.7.27-37. *The sea and the bronze oxen that were under it*, 1 Kg.7.23-26. The words *the covered way for the sabbath* represent a Hebrew phrase of uncertain meaning. Another interpretation is "the foundation of the seat."

17.1-41: The end of Israel, with reasons for the catastrophe; the origin of the Samaritans. **1:** *In the twelfth year of Ahaz* is probably an erroneous synchronism (compare 15.30; see p. 1533). **2:** Perhaps the writer treated *Hoshea* more gently because of his tragic position as the last king of Israel. **3:** This was *Shalmaneser V* (727-722 B.C.). **4-5:** See 15.30 n. *Hoshea* now foolishly and disastrously plotted with Egypt (compare Hos.7.11); he left the capital, perhaps to plead for mercy, but was imprisoned; the siege of *Samaria* continued for *three years*. **6:** In the meantime *Shalmaneser* died and was succeeded by *Sargon II* (Is.20.1), who captured the city and deported, according to his own records, 27,290 inhabitants to faraway places. Thus ended for all time the kingdom of Israel (721 B.C.). **7-18:** These verses are the most important in the entire book (1 and 2 Kg.) for the understanding of the theological and ethical viewpoint of the first Deuteronomist (see Introduction to 1 Kings). The Israelites were considered sinners in the

towns, from watchtower to fortified city; ¹⁰ they set up for themselves pillars and Ashe'rim on every high hill and under every green tree; ¹¹ and there they burned incense on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD carried away before them. And they did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger, ¹² and they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this." ¹³ Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets." ¹⁴ But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. ¹⁵ They despised his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and the warnings which he gave them. They went after false idols, and became false, and they followed the nations that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them. ¹⁶ And they forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves molten images of two calves; and they made an Ashe'rah, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Ba'al. ¹⁷ And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings,^e and used divination and sorcery, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ¹⁸ Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight; none was left but the tribe of Judah only.

19 Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced. ²⁰ And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, and afflicted them, and gave them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

21 When he had torn Israel from the house of David they made Jerobo'am the son of Nebat king. And Jerobo'am drove Israel from following the LORD and made them commit great sin. ²² The people of Israel walked in all the sins which Jerobo'am did; they did not depart from them, ²³ until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

24 And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sephar-va'im, and placed them in the cities of Sama'ria instead of the people of Israel; and they took possession of Sama'ria, and dwelt in its cities. ²⁵ And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. ²⁶ So the king of Assyria was told, "The nations which you have carried away and placed in the cities of Sama'ria do not know the law of the god of the land; therefore he has sent lions among them, and behold, they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land." ²⁷ Then the king of Assyria commanded, "Send there one of the priests whom you carried away thence; and

^e Or made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire

hands of an angry God (v. 18). Israel, not Assyria, was blamed. Playing politics with Egypt and Assyria was of no avail. Israel could have been saved by a proper attitude toward God and internal religious reform, but the warnings of the prophets were disregarded (vv. 13-14). *Asherim* (v. 10) and *Asherah* (v. 16), see 1 Kg.14.15 n.; 18.17-19 n. On the worship of the heavenly bodies (*host of heaven*, v. 16), see 21.5; 23.4-5. 17: Human sacrifice, see 3.27 n. 19-20: By a later writer, probably the second Deuteronomist, who knew the fate of the southern kingdom. 21-23: A concluding summary of vv. 7-18. 24-28: Sargon's own record confirms v. 24 thus: "[The cities] I set up again and made more populous than before. People from lands which I had taken I settled there." Later Assyrian kings continued this policy. The land was no

let him^f go and dwell there, and teach them the law of the god of the land.”

²⁸ So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Sama'ria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

²⁹ But every nation still made gods of its own, and put them in the shrines of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they dwelt; ³⁰ the men of Babylon made Suc'oth-be'noth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashi'ma, ³¹ and the Av'vites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sephar'vites burned their children in the fire to Adram'melech and Anam'melech, the gods of Sepharva'im. ³² They also feared the LORD, and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. ³³ So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away. ³⁴ To this day they do according to the former manner.

They do not fear the LORD, and they do not follow the statutes or the ordi-

nances or the law or the commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel. ³⁵ The LORD made a covenant with them, and commanded them, “You shall not fear other gods or bow yourselves to them or serve them or sacrifice to them; ³⁶ but you shall fear the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm; you shall bow yourselves to him, and to him you shall sacrifice. ³⁷ And the statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which he wrote for you, you shall always be careful to do. You shall not fear other gods, ³⁸ and you shall not forget the covenant that I have made with you. You shall not fear other gods, ³⁹ but you shall fear the LORD your God, and he will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.” ⁴⁰ However they would not listen, but they did according to their former manner.

⁴¹ So these nations feared the LORD, and also served their graven images; their children likewise, and their children's children—as their fathers did, so they do to this day.

f Syr Vg: Heb them

longer called Israel, but *Samaria* (v. 24). The peoples were *Samaritans* (v. 29), not Israelites. **29–34a:** Thus it came about that the worship of the LORD became contaminated by various foreign cults. *To this day* (v. 34a) presumably means the time of the first Deuteronomist, a century after the fall of Israel; *the former manner* refers to their pagan religions practiced before they were brought to Samaria. **34b–40:** An addition by a late Deuteronomic editor (neither the first nor the second Deuteronomist) who wished to make it plain that the Samaritans were not to be credited with any proper worship of the LORD whatever—they were to be considered beyond the pale of religiously proper persons. This Jewish attitude toward the Samaritans continued into New Testament times (Ezra 4.1–3; Lk.10.33; 17.16–18; Jn.4.9; 8.48). **41:** This verse summarizes vv. 29–34a.

18.1–20.21: The reign of Hezekiah. *Hezekiah* was almost as highly favored by the Deuteronomic writer (18.5) as Josiah (23.25). For this reason, perhaps, a comparatively large amount of space is allotted to Hezekiah's reign. The reign was also significant because of political events such as the attack of *Sennacherib* (18.13), and because of the activities of *the prophet Isaiah* (19.2). These three chapters present many exegetical problems, but the main outlines of the story seem to be clear: Hezekiah revolted against Assyria (18.7) and Judah was severely punished (701 B.C.). Sennacherib himself reported that forty-six of the fortified cities and “countless small villages” were taken, while Hezekiah was shut up in Jerusalem “like a bird in a cage” (compare Is.1.7–8). Jerusalem escaped capture only by the payment of a huge sum for indemnity (18.13–16). Judah was forced to remain a subservient vassal of Assyria. Some scholars believe that Sennacherib attacked again several years later and was repulsed; solid proof of this view (called “the two-campaign theory”) is lacking. 18.13–20.19 is repeated in Is. chs. 36–39 with certain omissions and additions. For additional comments see notes there.

18 In the third year of Hoshe'a son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezeki'ah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. ² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechari'ah. ³ And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. ⁴ He removed the high places, and broke the pillars, and cut down the Ashe'rah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had burned incense to it; it was called Nehush'tan. ⁵ He trusted in the LORD the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. ⁶ For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses. ⁷ And the LORD was with him; wherever he went forth, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria, and would not serve him. ⁸ He smote the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

⁹ In the fourth year of King Hezeki'ah, which was the seventh year of Hoshe'a son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmane'ser king of Assyria came up against Sama'ria and besieged it ¹⁰ and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezeki'ah, which was the ninth year of Hoshe'a king of Israel, Sama'ria was taken. ¹¹ The king of Assyria carried the

Israelites away to Assyria, and put them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, ¹² because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded; they neither listened nor obeyed.

¹³ In the fourteenth year of King Hezeki'ah Sennach'erib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. ¹⁴ And Hezeki'ah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear." And the king of Assyria required of Hezeki'ah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. ¹⁵ And Hezeki'ah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. ¹⁶ At that time Hezeki'ah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the doorposts which Hezeki'ah king of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria. ¹⁷ And the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rab'saris, and the Rab'shakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezeki'ah at Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Fuller's Field. ¹⁸ And when they called for the king, there came out to them Eli'akim the son of Hilki'ah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary,

18.1-12: The accession of Hezekiah, his reforms. **1:** *In the third year of Hoshea* is probably too early. The Deuteronomic author wishes to place the fall of Samaria during the reign of Hezekiah (vv. 9-10), but modern chronologists tend to place this catastrophe in the reign of Ahaz, in conformity with v. 13 (fourteenth yr. of Hezekiah = about 701 B.C., first yr. = about 715 B.C.). **4:** *Asherah*, see 1 Kg. 14.15 n. *The bronze serpent*, see Num. 21.6-9; this object doubtless had pagan associations, since the serpent was one of the symbols of the Baal religion. **9-12:** The fall of Samaria; largely a repetition of 17.5-6.

18.13-37: The attack of Sennacherib. See Is. ch. 36. These verses present the basic elements of the historical incident. Verses 14-16 are lacking from the account in Is. ch. 36. **17-36:** If this narrative belongs to the first (and only historically certain) attack of Sennacherib, it should come before v. 14. Otherwise, it may be referred to the hypothetical second campaign some twelve or thirteen years later. **17-18:** Three Assyrian officials, *the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and*

and Jo'ah the son of Asaph, the recorder.

19 And the Rab'shakeh said to them, "Say to Hezeki'ah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this confidence of yours?' ²⁰ Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? On whom do you now rely, that you have rebelled against me?' ²¹ Behold, you are relying now on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him. ²² But if you say to me, 'We rely on the LORD our God,' is it not he whose high places and altars Hezeki'ah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?" ²³ Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders upon them. ²⁴ How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you rely on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? ²⁵ Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

26 Then Eli'akim the son of Hilki'ah, and Shebna, and Jo'ah, said to the Rab'shakeh, "Pray, speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall." ²⁷ But the Rab'shakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine?"

28 Then the Rab'shakeh stood and

called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹ Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezeki'ah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. ³⁰ Do not let Hezeki'ah make you to rely on the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' ³¹ Do not listen to Hezeki'ah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make your peace with me and come out to me; then every one of you will eat of his own vine, and every one of his own fig tree, and every one of you will drink the water of his own cistern; ³² until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live, and not die. And do not listen to Hezeki'ah when he misleads you by saying, The LORD will deliver us. ³³ Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharva'im, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Sama'ria out of my hand? ³⁵ Who among all the gods of the countries have delivered their countries out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

36 But the people were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, "Do not answer him." ³⁷ Then Eli'akim the son of Hilki'ah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Jo'ah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezeki'ah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of the Rab'shakeh.

19 When King Hezeki'ah heard it, he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into

the Rabshakeh confer with three Judahite officials. 26: After the Exile the Aramaic language (the language of Syria) came into common use among the Jews of Palestine (see Neh.8.7-8 n.), and thus was the medium in which Jesus proclaimed the Christian gospel; the language of Judah here means what is now called Hebrew, which was largely superseded by Aramaic.

19.1-37: Hezekiah consults Isaiah. See Is. ch. 37. Sennacherib departs without capturing

the house of the LORD. ² And he sent Eli'akim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. ³ They said to him, "Thus says Hezeki'ah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. ⁴ It may be that the LORD your God heard all the words of the Rab'shakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left." ⁵ When the servants of King Hezeki'ah came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. ⁷ Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'"

⁸ The Rab'shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah; for he heard that the king had left Lachish. ⁹ And when the king heard concerning Tirha'kah king of Ethiopia, "Behold, he has set out to fight against you," he sent messengers again to Hezeki'ah, saying, ¹⁰ "Thus shall you speak to Hezeki'ah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, destroying

them utterly. And shall you be delivered? ¹² Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations which my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Tel-assar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharva'im, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?'"

¹⁴ Hezeki'ah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezeki'ah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵ And Hezeki'ah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD the God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, thou art the God, thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ Incline thy ear, O LORD, and hear; open thy eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennach'erib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁷ Of a truth, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, ¹⁸ and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they were destroyed. ¹⁹ So now, O LORD our God, save us, I beseech thee, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou, O LORD, art God alone."

²⁰ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezeki'ah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennach'erib king of Assyria I have heard. ²¹ This is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him:

"She despises you, she scorns you—the virgin daughter of Zion;

Jerusalem and is assassinated by his sons. Legend and history seem to be interwoven here. In neither campaign (if there were two) did Judah really win a victory; Jerusalem merely escaped capture. It is questionable whether *the prophet Isaiah* predicted the assassination of Sennacherib (v. 7), uttered a taunt song or ode of derision against the Assyrian king (vv. 20–28), or proclaimed the inviolability of the city (v. 34). Tradition tended to turn an escape into a victory. ⁹: *Tirhakah king of Ethiopia* did not become king or pharaoh of Egypt until 690 or 688 B.C.; hence some have regarded mention of this name as proof of a second campaign (see 18.17–36 n.). Others regard the name as an error, or point out that *Tirhakah* was a general long before he became king. **20–28**: For similar anti-Assyrian material, also attributed to *Isaiah*, compare Is.10.12–19; 14.24–27. **21**: *Daughter of Zion and daughter of Jerusalem*, read "daughter Zion"

she wags her head behind you—
the daughter of Jerusalem.

22 "Whom have you mocked and
reviled?

Against whom have you raised
your voice
and haughtily lifted your eyes?
Against the Holy One of Israel!

23 By your messengers you have
mocked the Lord,
and you have said, 'With my many
chariots

I have gone up the heights of the
mountains,
to the far recesses of Lebanon;
I felled its tallest cedars,
its choicest cypresses;
I entered its farthest retreat,
its densest forest.

24 I dug wells
and drank foreign waters,
and I dried up with the sole of my
foot
all the streams of Egypt.'

25 "Have you not heard
that I determined it long ago?
I planned from days of old
what now I bring to pass,
that you should turn fortified cities
into heaps of ruins,

26 while their inhabitants, shorn of
strength,
are dismayed and confounded,
and have become like plants of the
field,
and like tender grass,
like grass on the housetops;
blighted before it is grown?

27 "But I know your sitting down
and your going out and coming in,
and your raging against me.

28 Because you have raged against me
and your arrogance has come into
my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth,
and I will turn you back on the way
by which you came.

29 "And this shall be the sign for
you: this year you shall eat what
grows of itself, and in the second
year what springs of the same; then in
the third year sow, and reap, and plant
vineyards, and eat their fruit. ³⁰ And
the surviving remnant of the house of
Judah shall again take root downward,
and bear fruit upward; ³¹ for out of
Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and
out of Mount Zion a band of survivors.
The zeal of the LORD will do this.

32 "Therefore thus says the LORD
concerning the king of Assyria, He
shall not come into this city or shoot an
arrow there, or come before it with a
shield or cast up a siege mound against
it. ³³ By the way that he came, by the
same he shall return, and he shall not
come into this city, says the LORD.
³⁴ For I will defend this city to save
it, for my own sake and for the sake
of my servant David."

35 And that night the angel of the
LORD went forth, and slew a hundred
and eighty-five thousand in the camp
of the Assyrians; and when men arose
early in the morning, behold, these
were all dead bodies. ³⁶ Then Sen-

and "daughter Jerusalem," terms of endearment. 29-31: These verses, though not very clear, seem to be more modestly realistic than the rest of the chapter in expecting only *a remnant* and *a band of survivors* to carry forward the work of the LORD. 32-34: Contrast these verses with the preceding. It has been claimed, on the basis of this passage and the parallel in Is.37.33-35, that Isaiah taught the doctrine of "the inviolability of Zion," i.e. that Jerusalem could never be taken (compare 20.6). Many interpreters doubt this claim, with very good reason. 35: Does this miracle story have a basis in fact? Some call attention to the statement in Herodotus (*Hist.*, II.141) that *the Assyrians* suffered a defeat on the borders of Egypt because their bowstrings and other leather equipment were chewed by a sudden onslaught of field mice. Mice may be carriers of the plague (see 1 Sam.6.4-5 n.). 37: The murder did not take place until the year 681, twenty years after the first (and only?) campaign against Jerusalem, and at least eight years after the hypothetical second campaign. The god *Nisroch* has not been identified with certainty. *Ararat* is Armenia (compare Gen.8.4).

nach'erib king of Assyria departed, and went home, and dwelt at Nin'evah. ³⁷ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adram'melech and Share'zer, his sons, slew him with the sword, and escaped into the land of Ar'arat. And Esarhad'don his son reigned in his stead.

20 In those days Hezeki'ah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order; for you shall die, you shall not recover.'" ² Then Hezeki'ah turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, ³ "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in thy sight." And Hezeki'ah wept bitterly. ⁴ And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: ⁵ "Turn back, and say to Hezeki'ah the prince of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you; on the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. ⁶ And I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David's sake." ⁷ And Isaiah said, "Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil, that he may recover."

⁸ And Hezeki'ah said to Isaiah, "What shall be the sign that the LORD

will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD on the third day?" ⁹ And Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he has promised: shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps?"

¹⁰ And Hezeki'ah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to lengthen ten steps; rather let the shadow go back ten steps." ¹¹ And Isaiah the prophet cried to the LORD; and he brought the shadow back ten steps, by which the sun^s had declined on the dial of Ahaz.

¹² At that time Mero'dach-bal'adan the son of Bal'adan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezeki'ah; for he heard that Hezeki'ah had been sick. ¹³ And Hezeki'ah welcomed them, and he showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his armory, all that was found in his storehouses; there was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezeki'ah did not show them. ¹⁴ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezeki'ah, and said to him, "What did these men say? And whence did they come to you?" And Hezeki'ah said, "They have come from a far country, from Babylon." ¹⁵ He said, "What have they seen in your house?" And Hezeki'ah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them."

¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to Hezeki'ah, "Hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁷ Behold, the days are coming, when all

^g Syr See Is 38.8 and Tg: Heb lacks the sun

20.1-11: Hezekiah's illness and recovery. See Is. ch. 38. 1: *In those days* is only a vague indication of time. Actually, this chapter (except for vv. 20-21) is out of order, for both stories in it belong before the attack of Sennacherib in 701 B.C. (compare v. 6; Merodach-baladan ruled in Babylon, 722-710 B.C. and 703-702). 7: The use of a cake of figs as a poultice was widespread in Bible times. 8-10: Compare Jos.10.12-13 and 1 Kg. ch. 17 n. Though it is really the earth which moves, we sophisticated moderns still say, "The sun rises."

20.12-19: Merodach-baladan's embassy. See Is. 39.1-8. The Babylonian name of Merodach-baladan was Marduk-apaliddina. This mission was a part of the plotting against Assyria to which Isaiah was opposed and which led to the disastrous attack of 701 B.C., discussed above (18.7,21; Is.7.17; 8.7-8; 20.1-6; 31.1-3). 16-19: Babylon and Egypt were both plotting; Isaiah was a neutralist, opposed to both; he was equally opposed to an alliance with Assyria (see 16.7-9 n.); but after Judah became an Assyrian vassal, he advocated loyalty to the obligation.

that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, says the LORD. ¹⁸ And some of your own sons, who are born to you, shall be taken away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” ¹⁹ Then said Hezeki’ah to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?”

²⁰ The rest of the deeds of Hezeki’ah, and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²¹ And Hezeki’ah slept with his fathers; and Manas’sch his son reigned in his stead.

21 Manas’sch was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Heph’zibah. ² And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. ³ For he rebuilt the high places which Hezeki’ah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Ba’al, and made an Ashe’rah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them. ⁴ And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem will I

put my name.” ⁵ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶ And he burned his son as an offering, and practiced soothsaying and augury, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ⁷ And the graven image of Ashe’rah that he had made he set in the house of which the LORD said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name for ever; ⁸ and I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land which I gave to their fathers, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.” ⁹ But they did not listen, and Manas’sch seduced them to do more evil than the nations had done whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.

¹⁰ And the LORD said by his servants the prophets, ¹¹ “Because Manas’sch king of Judah has committed these abominations, and has done things more wicked than all that the Amorites did, who were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols; ¹² therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing upon Jerusalem and Judah such evil that the ears of every one

The point of these verses, that Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah, and warned against the danger of invasion, would seem to be correct; the anachronistic reference to the Babylonian captivity, which took place more than a century later, was introduced by a careless post-exilic editor. It was Assyria not Babylon that punished Hezekiah.

20.20-21: Deuteronomic conclusion to the reign of Hezekiah, with an additional note about the pool and the conduit, improvements in the water supply of Jerusalem in preparation for possible attack (compare Is.22.8b-11). This conduit, with an identifying inscription, has been found and is now popularly called Hezekiah’s Tunnel, or the Siloam Tunnel (compare 2 Chr. 32.30). It runs from Gihon (see 1 Kg.1.33 n.), which was outside the city wall, to the Pool of Siloam, which was inside the wall. Extending 1700 feet through solid rock, this tunnel was a remarkable engineering achievement in its time.

21.1-26: The wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon. According to the Deuteronomists, this was the worst period of apostasy in Judah. Any good done by Hezekiah was quickly undone by Manasseh, who probably reigned longer than any other king of Israel or Judah, though the figure of *fifty-five years* appears to be exaggerated (see p. 1533). For a somewhat different interpretation, see 2 Chr. ch. 33. **3:** *Asherah*, see 1 Kg.14.15 n. Child sacrifice, see 3.27 n. **7-9:** Compare Dt.12.5,29-31; 17.3; 18.9-14. **10-15:** This section is from the second Deuteronomist,

who hears of it will tingle. ¹³ And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Sama'ria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab; and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. ¹⁴ And I will cast off the remnant of my heritage, and give them into the hand of their enemies, and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies, ¹⁵ because they have done what is evil in my sight and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day."

16 Moreover Manas'sseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides the sin which he made Judah to sin so that they did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

17 Now the rest of the acts of Manas'sseh, and all that he did, and the sin that he committed, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ¹⁸ And Manas'sseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza; and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshul'lemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. ²⁰ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manas'sseh his father had done. ²¹ He walked in all the way in which his father walked, and served the idols that his father served, and worshiped them; ²² he forsook the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. ²³ And the servants of Amon conspired against

him, and killed the king in his house. ²⁴ But the people of the land slew all those who had conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made Josi'ah his son king in his stead. ²⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁶ And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza; and Josi'ah his son reigned in his stead.

22 Josi'ah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedi'dah the daughter of Adai'ah of Bozkath. ² And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

3 In the eighteenth year of King Josi'ah, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azali'ah, son of Meshul'lam, the secretary, to the house of the LORD, saying, ⁴ "Go up to Hilki'ah the high priest, that he may reckon the amount of the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people; ⁵ and let it be given into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD; and let them give it to the workmen who are at the house of the LORD, repairing the house, ⁶ that is, to the carpenters, and to the builders, and to the masons, as well as for buying timber and quarried stone to repair the house. ⁷ But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money which is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly."

writing after the fall of *Jerusalem* in 587-6 B.C. and during the Babylonian captivity (see Introduction to 1 Kings). This writer blames the fall of Jerusalem and Judah on the apostasy of Manasseh. *Amorites*, see 2 Sam.21.2 n. *The measuring line . . . and the plummet*, see Is.34.11; Lam.2.8; Am.7.7-9. 16: *Manasseh* actually persecuted the followers of the LORD, practically driving them underground. 19-26: A popular reaction and revolt set in, ending in the assassination of Amon early in his reign, and the accession of Josiah.

22.1-20: The beginning of the reign of Josiah; the repairing of the temple and the finding of the book of the law. 1-2: *Josiah* is the favorite king of the Deuteronomists because of his reforms (see ch. 23). 3-7: *The eighteenth year of King Josiah*, 621 B.C. On the collection of *money* (unminted metal) to repair the temple, compare 12.4-16. 8-10: This *book of the law*, really a scroll,

8 And Hilki'ah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilki'ah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. ⁹ And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD." ¹⁰ Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilki'ah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

11 And when the king heard the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes. ¹² And the king commanded Hilki'ah the priest, and Ahi-kam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asai'ah the king's servant, saying, ¹³ "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

14 So Hilki'ah the priest, and Ahi-kam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asai'ah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they talked with her. ¹⁵ And she said to them,

"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me, ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷ Because they have forsaken me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. ¹⁸ But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words which you have heard, ¹⁹ because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have rent your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the LORD. ²⁰ Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.' " And they brought back word to the king.

23 Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. ² And the king went up to the house of the LORD, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the

was apparently found in a collection box (12.9) or in some rubbish about to be removed from the temple. It is also possible that *Hilkiah* had known about it and brought it forth intentionally at this time. The scroll almost certainly contained the earliest form of our present book of Deuteronomy (see Introduction to Deuteronomy), as subsequent references in this and the following chapter will show. 11-13: The consternation of *the king* and his reference to *the wrath of the LORD* suggest that the scroll contained such words as those of Dt.6.13-15 and 28.15-24. To *inquire of the LORD* in an emergency by consulting a prophet was common practice (see 1 Kg.22.5-12 n.). 16-17: These words seem so threatening that they may have been rewritten by the second Deuteronomist after the fall of Jerusalem. 20: This sounds original; Huldah could not have known that Josiah would die a violent death on the field of battle.

23.1-30: The reforms and death of Josiah. 1-3: The adoption of this program not only meant a religious reform, but also a declaration of political independence from Assyria, which was now in its last days as a great power (Nineveh fell in 612 B.C.). 2: *The book of the covenant*, contrast 22.8,11. The idea of *the covenant*, or agreement, between the LORD and his people is

book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.³ And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book; and all the people joined in the covenant.

4 And the king commanded Hilki'ah, the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels made for Ba'al, for Ashe'rah, and for all the host of heaven; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.⁵ And he deposed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places at the cities of Judah and round about Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Ba'al, to the sun, and the moon, and the constellations, and all the host of the heavens.⁶ And he brought out the Ashe'rah from the house of the LORD, outside Jerusalem, to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and beat it to dust and cast the dust of it upon the graves of the common people.⁷ And he broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes which were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Ashe'rah.⁸ And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates that were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on one's left at the gate of the city.⁹ However, the priests of the high

places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.¹⁰ And he defiled To'pheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech.¹¹ And he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the precincts;^h and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.¹² And the altars on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manas'sesh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, he pulled down and broke in pieces,ⁱ and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.¹³ And the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ash'toreth the abomination of the Sido'nians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.¹⁴ And he broke in pieces the pillars, and cut down the Ashe'rim, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15 Moreover the altar at Bethel, the high place erected by Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, that altar with the high place he pulled down and he broke in pieces its stones,^j crushing them to dust; also he burned the Ashe'rah.¹⁶ And as Josi'ah turned, he saw the tombs there on the mount; and he sent and took the bones out of the tombs, and burned them upon the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of the LORD which the

^h The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

ⁱ Heb pieces from there

^j Gk: Heb he burned the high place

one of the most important elements in Old Testament religion (see Ex.24.7-8; Dt.29.1; Jer. 11.3-4; 30.22 and many other similar passages). *The pillar*, see 11.14; 1 Kg.7.15-22 n. 4-14: Josiah tried valiantly to get rid of the pagan cults in accordance with Dt.15.19-18.22. He even attempted to abolish all worship of the LORD outside of the temple in Jerusalem (at the high places, v. 8, compare Dt. ch. 12). The consequently unemployed local priests (called Levites in Deuteronomy) were supposed to join the temple staff in Jerusalem (Dt.18.6-8), but this

man of God proclaimed, who had predicted these things.¹⁷ Then he said, "What is yonder monument that I see?" And the men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things which you have done against the altar at Bethel."¹⁸ And he said, "Let him be; let no man move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came out of Sama'ria.¹⁹ And all the shrines also of the high places that were in the cities of Sama'ria, which kings of Israel had made, provoking the LORD to anger, Josi'ah removed; he did to them according to all that he had done at Bethel.²⁰ And he slew all the priests of the high places who were there, upon the altars, and burned the bones of men upon them. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

21 And the king commanded all the people, "Keep the passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant."²² For no such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah;²³ but in the eighteenth year of King Josi'ah this passover was kept to the LORD in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover Josi'ah put away the mediums and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilki'ah

the priest found in the house of the LORD.²⁵ Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

26 Still the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manas'sah had provoked him.²⁷ And the LORD said, "I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city which I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there."

28 Now the rest of the acts of Josi'ah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?²⁹ In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphra'tes. King Josi'ah went to meet him; and Pharaoh Neco slew him at Megid'do, when he saw him.³⁰ And his servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megid'do, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jeho'ahaz the son of Josi'ah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

31 Jeho'ahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamu'tal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.³² And he did what was evil in the

arrangement did not succeed (v. 9). 17-18: See 1 Kg. ch. 13 (and notes there). *Samaria* is probably an error for Bethel (compare 1 Kg. 13.11, 31). 21-23: The great *passover*, the climax of the reform. 24-25: Opinion differs as to whether the first Deuteronomist ended his account just before or just after the death of Josiah in 609 B.C. The last clause of v. 25 is from the second Deuteronomist. Compare the evaluation of Hezekiah in 18.5. 26-27: These verses are definitely from the second Deuteronomist (see 21.10-15 n.). 28-30: If the first Deuteronomist ended his work with the death of Josiah (609 B.C.), these verses are his. Compare the fuller account of Josiah's death in 2 Chr. 35.20-24. Nineveh had fallen in 612 before the Medes and Chaldeans, but Assyria was still fighting; Egypt was the ally of Assyria, hence *Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria* to help him. Josiah, now in revolt against Assyria, felt it necessary to oppose Neco. Josiah lost his life, and Judah became a vassal of Egypt.

23.31-37: The reign of Jehoahaz and the beginning of the reign of Jehoikim. The people's choice for king (v. 30) was Jehoahaz or Shallum (1 Chr. 3.15; Jer. 22.11), a younger son of Josiah;

sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. ³³ And Pharaoh Neco put him in bonds at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and laid upon the land a tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ³⁴ And Pharaoh Neco made Eli'akim the son of Josi'ah king in the place of Josi'ah his father, and changed his name to Jehoi'akim. But he took Jeho'ahaz away; and he came to Egypt, and died there. ³⁵ And Jehoi'akim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land to give the money according to the command of Pharaoh. He exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Neco.

³⁶ Jehoi'akim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebi'dah the daughter of Pedai'ah of Rumah. ³⁷ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

24 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoi'akim became his servant three years; then he turned and rebelled against him. ² And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chalde'ans, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the Ammonites, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which he spoke by his servants the prophets. ³ Surely this came

upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manas'sah, according to all that he had done, ⁴ and also for the innocent blood that he had shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon. ⁵ Now the rest of the deeds of Jehoi'akim, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ⁶ So Jehoi'akim slept with his fathers, and Jehoi'achin his son reigned in his stead. ⁷ And the king of Egypt did not come again out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates.

⁸ Jehoi'achin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehush'ta the daughter of Elna'than of Jerusalem. ⁹ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

¹⁰ At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. ¹¹ And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city, while his servants were besieging it; ¹² and Jehoi'achin the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign, ¹³ and carried off all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the

but Pharaoh Neco was now master. He deposed Jehoahaz, levied heavy tribute, and made Eliakim, an older son, king, changing his name to Jehoiakim as a symbol of his vassalage.

24.1-17: The first fall of Jerusalem and the first deportation (reigns of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin). 1-7: Verse 7 should really come first. The Chaldeans (the Neo-Babylonians) defeated the Assyrians and Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. (Jer.46.2). This event removed Egyptian control of Judah, which thereupon came under the dominance of the Chaldeans, but revolted after three years (v. 1). Verses 3-4 are the comment of the second Deuteronomist. 8: Jehoiakim died (598 B.C.) before he could be punished, and his young son Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah, 1 Chr.3.16, and Coniah, Jer.22.24) took the tottering throne. 10-17: Jehoiachin almost immediately surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar (more correct form, Nebuchadrezzar, Jer.21.2 and frequently in Jeremiah), on March 16, 597 B.C., in the seventh (Jer.52.28) year of Nebuchadrezzar, as related in the Babylonian records. According to v. 14, ten thousand captives were deported; according to v. 16, eight thousand; Jer.52.28 says 3,023, which perhaps does not count women and children, or perhaps it is a more accurate figure. Tablets found in Babylon

treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the LORD, which Solomon king of Israel had made, as the LORD had foretold. ¹⁴ He carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths; none remained, except the poorest people of the land. ¹⁵ And he carried away Jehoi'achin to Babylon; the king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the chief men of the land, he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. ¹⁶ And the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon all the men of valor, seven thousand, and the craftsmen and the smiths, one thousand, all of them strong and fit for war. ¹⁷ And the king of Babylon made Mattani'ah, Jehoi'achin's uncle, king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedeki'ah.

¹⁸ Zedeki'ah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamu'tal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ¹⁹ And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoi'akim had done. ²⁰ For because of the anger of the LORD it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence.

And Zedeki'ah rebelled against the **25** king of Babylon. ¹ And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezz'zar king of Babylon came with all his army against

Jerusalem, and laid siege to it; and they built siegeworks against it round about. ² So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedeki'ah. ³ On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁴ Then a breach was made in the city; the king with all the men of war fled^k by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, though the Chalde'ans were around the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah. ⁵ But the army of the Chalde'ans pursued the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. ⁶ Then they captured the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, who passed sentence upon him. ⁷ They slew the sons of Zedeki'ah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedeki'ah, and bound him in fetters, and took him to Babylon.

⁸ In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezz'zar, king of Babylon—Nebu'zarad'an, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ And he burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. ¹⁰ And all the army of the Chalde'ans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. ¹¹ And

^k Gk Compare Jer 39.4; 52.7: Heb lacks *the king and fled*

make reference to Jehoiachin and five sons (compare 1 Chr.3.17–18). His uncle *Mattaniah*, another son of Josiah (1 Chr.3.15), was made *king in his stead*, and given a new name, *Zedekiah*, as a token of vassalage (see 23.31–37 n.).

24.18–25.21: The reign of Zedekiah; second fall of Jerusalem and its destruction; the second deportation. This section is repeated in Jer. ch. 52 with certain changes; 25.1–12 is found in Jer.39.1–10 with changes; compare the parallel in 2 Chr.36.11–21. **24.18:** More information about Zedekiah is found in Jer. chs. 21; 24; 27; 29; 32; 37; 38; Ezek.17.11–21. **24.20b–25.7:** The sad story hastens to its woeful conclusion. In spite of his oath of allegiance (2 Chr.36.13; Ezek.17.13), *Zedekiah* began to plot with Egypt and other nations against the Chaldeans (Jer. 27.3–7; Ezek.17.15), and *rebelled against the king of Babylon*. Jerusalem was besieged, and after terrible privation (25.3; Dt.28.52–57; Lam.4.10), fell in the *eleventh year of King Zedekiah*, 587 or 586 B.C. The king was tortured and carried to *Babylon*, where he died (Jer.52.11). **25.8–12:** The temple, the palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem were burned, and the walls were broken down. A second deportation was carried out (see 24.10–17 n.), the number taken being only 832,

the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude, Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard carried into exile.¹² But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen.

13 And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chalde'ans broke in pieces, and carried the bronze to Babylon.¹⁴ And they took away the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the dishes for incense and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service,¹⁵ the firepans also, and the bowls. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver.¹⁶ As for the two pillars, the one sea, and the stands, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight.¹⁷ The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and upon it was a capital of bronze; the height of the capital was three cubits; a network and pomegranates, all of bronze, were upon the capital round about. And the second pillar had the like, with the network.

18 And the captain of the guard took Serai'ah the chief priest, and Zephani'ah the second priest, and the three keepers of the threshold;¹⁹ and from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the men of

war, and five men of the king's council who were found in the city; and the secretary of the commander of the army who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city.

²⁰ And Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

²¹ And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.

22 And over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, son of Shaphan, governor.

²³ Now when all the captains of the forces in the open country¹ and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedali'ah governor, they came with their men to Gedali'ah at Mizpah, namely, Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah, and Joha'nan the son of Kare'ah, and Serai'ah the son of Tanhu'meth the Netoph'athite, and Jazani'ah the son of the Ma-ac'athite.

²⁴ And Gedali'ah swore to them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid because of the Chalde'an officials; dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."²⁵ But in the seventh month,

Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah, son of Eli'shama, of the royal family, came with ten men, and attacked and killed Gedali'ah and the Jews and the Chalde'ans who were with him at

¹ With Jer 40.7: Heb lacks in the open country

according to Jer.52.29. 13-17: All the valuable equipment of the temple was carried to Babylon. 18-21: All remaining leaders were executed. 22-26: This section does not appear in Jer. ch. 52; there is, however, an expanded account in Jer.40.7-41.18. In Jer.40.6 and chs. 42-43, the prophet is brought into the story. It is a cause for amazement that Jeremiah is not mentioned even once in 2 Kings, whereas the book of Jeremiah contains a wealth of additional information about the last days of Judah.

25.22-26: The governorship of Gedaliah. 22-24: The abolition of the monarchy and the appointment of Gedaliah as a native governor under Chaldean control should have meant peace and stability for Judah. Gedaliah's father, Ahi'kam, had been a trusted adviser of Josiah (22.12) and a friend of Jeremiah (Jer.26.24). Gedaliah himself was well disposed toward the prophet (Jer.39.14; 40.6), and enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens (Jer.40.11-12). 25-26: The dastardly assassination of this good man by Ishmael, a member of the deposed royal family, brought about utter chaos and ruin (Jer.40.13-41.18); see the evaluation of the situation by the Deuteronomic editor of the book of Jeremiah in Jer.44.1-14.

Mizpah. ²⁸ Then all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the forces arose, and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chalde'ans.

27 And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoi'achin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-mero'dach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoi'achin king of Judah from

prison; ²⁸ and he spoke kindly to him, and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. ²⁹ So Jehoi'achin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table; ³⁰ and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, every day a portion, as long as he lived.

25.27-30: Jehoiachin in exile. Also found in Jer.52.31-34. From about 560 B.C., shortly before he finished the book in about 550 (see Introduction to 1 Kings), the second Deuteronomist received this report that Jehoiachin was still safe, and was enjoying favored treatment by *the king of Babylon*. The report has been partially confirmed by archaeological researches. The writer may have used this information to end his book with a note of modest hope, as though to say (in spite of 24.9): the Davidic dynasty has not been snuffed out.

CHRONICLES

In the Hebrew Bible 1 and 2 Chronicles were originally a single book, as were 1 and 2 Samuel and also 1 and 2 Kings (see p. 330). The two books of Chronicles are now usually considered to have been part of a larger work which included the books of Ezra and Nehemiah (see Introduction to Ezra).

The purpose of 1 and 2 Chronicles, like that of 1 and 2 Kings, is theological and idealistic. There is practically no attempt to present history as we understand the word. The Chronicler wishes to advocate a certain pattern of religious life for his own day, and to indicate what a proper kingdom of his people under God would be like. He does this by describing the reigns of David and Solomon in particular, not as they actually had been, but as they ought to have been. David, especially, is highly idealized, and becomes the real founder of the temple and its ritual. A primary interest of the Chronicler is in the staff of the post-exilic temple, the organization of the priests, Levites, musicians, custodians, and others. Because of his manifest concern with Levites and singers in particular, it has been conjectured that the Chronicler was both a Levite and a singer.

The sources used by the Chronicler are mainly the books of Samuel and Kings, which are often quoted verbatim though never mentioned by name. Likewise utilized are parts of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, and Ruth. In addition, about sixteen titles of other sources are mentioned, such as "the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah," "the Chronicles of Samuel the Seer," "the Chronicles of Nathan the Prophet," "the Commentary on the Book of Kings," and the like. It is probable that all of these titles refer to parts of a single book, now lost. Though in a few instances the Chronicler seems to have had better information than that incorporated in other canonical books, most of the changes and additions came from the writer's strong sense of what ought to have been as a pattern for conduct in his own time and in the future.

If Ezra-Nehemiah are a part of the Chronicler's work, our books cannot be dated before about 400 B.C. Some scholars date them as late as 250 B.C., well into the Greek period. Since the evidences of Greek influence are few, it is well to adopt an intermediate date of 350-300 B.C.

Chapters 1-9 of 1 Chronicles present a series of genealogies. The Chronicler, or the final editor of his book, wished to make it clear that he was dealing with the true Chosen People. Chapters 10-29 are the Chronicler's account of David as a great monarch and the founder of the temple and its ritual.

ADAM, SETH, ENOSH; ² KENAN, Ma-hal'alel, Jared; ³ Enoch, Methu'selah, Lamech; ⁴ Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

⁵ The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ⁶ The sons of Gomer: Ash'kenaz, Diphath, and Togarmah. ⁷ The sons of Javan: Eli-

shah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Ro'danim.

⁸ The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁹ The sons of Cush: Seba, Hav'ilah, Sabta, Ra'ama, and Sab'teca. The sons of Ra'amah: Sheba and Dedan. ¹⁰ Cush was the father of Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

¹¹ Egypt was the father of Ludim,

1.1-54: The place of Abraham and his descendants among the nations of mankind. 1-4: Summary of Gen. ch. 5. 5-7: The sons of Japheth, or the Japhethites, were in general the ancestors of those people whom today we call Indo-Europeans; for example, *Javan* (lit., Ionia) refers to the Greeks (compare Gen.10.2-4). 8-16: Today the term "Hamitic" is restricted largely to the peoples and languages of ancient Egypt; the Canaanites (*Canaan*) and the *Amorites* are now classified as Semites, and the Hittites (*Heth*) are sometimes classified among the Indo-Europeans. *Cush* sometimes refers to Ethiopia (v. 8), sometimes to a location in Mesopotamia (v. 10).

An'amim, Le'habim, Naph-tu'him,
¹² Pathru'sim, Caslu'him (whence
 came the Philis'tines), and Caph'-
 torim.

¹³ Canaan was the father of Sidon
 his first-born, and Heth, ¹⁴ and the
 Jeb'usites, the Am'orites, the Gir'-
 gashites, ¹⁵ the Hivites, the Arkites,
 the Sinites, ¹⁶ the Ar'vadites, the
 Zem'arites, and the Ha'mathites.

¹⁷ The sons of Shem: Elam, As-
 shur, Arpach'shad, Lud, Aram, Uz,
 Hul, Gether, and Meshech. ¹⁸ Ar-
 pach'shad was the father of Shelah;
 and Shelah was the father of Eber.
¹⁹ To Eber were born two sons: the
 name of the one was Peleg (for in his
 days the earth was divided), and the
 name of his brother Joktan. ²⁰ Joktan
 was the father of Almo'dad, Sheleph,
 Hazarma'veth, Jerah, ²¹ Hador'am,
 Uzal, Diklah, ²² Ebal, Abim'a-el,
 Sheba, ²³ Ophir, Hav'ilah, and
 Jobab; all these were the sons of
 Joktan.

²⁴ Shem, Arpach'shad, Shelah;
²⁵ Eber, Peleg, Re'u; ²⁶ Serug, Nahor,
 Terah; ²⁷ Abram, that is, Abraham.

²⁸ The sons of Abraham: Isaac
 and Ish'mael. ²⁹ These are their gene-
 alogies: the first-born of Ish'mael, Ne-
 ba'ioth; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,
³⁰ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad,
 Tema, ³¹ Jetur, Naphish, and Ked'-
 emah. These are the sons of Ish'mael.
³² The sons of Ketu'rah, Abraham's
 concubine: she bore Zimran, Jokshan,
 Medan, Mid'ian, Ishbak, and Shu'ah.
 The sons of Jokshan: Sheba and
 Dedan. ³³ The sons of Mid'ian:
 Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and
 Elda'ah. All these were the descend-
 ants of Ketu'rah.

³⁴ Abraham was the father of Isaac.
 The sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel.
³⁵ The sons of Esau: Eli'phaz, Reu'el,
 Je'ush, Jalam, and Korah. ³⁶ The sons
 of Eli'phaz: Teman, Omar, Zephi,
 Gatam, Kenaz, Timna, and Am'alek.
³⁷ The sons of Reu'el: Nahath, Zerah,
 Shammah, and Mizzah.

³⁸ The sons of Se'ir: Lotan, Sho-
 bal, Zib'eon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and
 Dishan. ³⁹ The sons of Lotan: Hori
 and Homam; and Lotan's sister was
 Timna. ⁴⁰ The sons of Shobal: Al'ian,
 Man'ahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam.
 The sons of Zib'eon: Ai'ah and Anah.
⁴¹ The sons of Anah: Dishon. The
 sons of Dishon: Hamran, Eshban,
 Ithran, and Cheran. ⁴² The sons of
 Ezer: Bilhan, Za'avan, and Ja'akan.
 The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

⁴³ These are the kings who reigned
 in the land of Edom before any king
 reigned over the Israelites: Bela the
 son of Be'or, the name of whose city
 was Din'habah. ⁴⁴ When Bela died,
 Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah
 reigned in his stead. ⁴⁵ When Jobab
 died, Husham of the land of the
 Te'manites reigned in his stead.
⁴⁶ When Husham died, Hadad the son
 of Bedad, who defeated Mid'ian in the
 country of Moab, reigned in his stead;
 and the name of his city was Avith.
⁴⁷ When Hadad died, Samlah of Mas-
 re'kah reigned in his stead. ⁴⁸ When
 Samlah died, Sha'ul of Reho'both on
 the Euphra'tes reigned in his stead.
⁴⁹ When Sha'ul died, Ba'al-ha'n'an,
 the son of Achbor, reigned in his stead.
⁵⁰ When Ba'al-ha'n'an died, Hadad
 reigned in his stead; and the name of
 his city was Pa'i, and his wife's name
 Mehet'abel the daughter of Matred,

Compare Gen.10.6-20. **17-27**: *The sons of Shem*, or the Semites. The Hebrews (*Eber*) belonged to this group, and from it emerged *Abram* or *Abraham*. Such modern terms as "Hamitic" and "Semitic" have linguistic, rather than racial, connotations. Ancient classifications (such as *sons of Shem*) were based more on considerations of geography and cultural (not racial) affinity. Verses 17-23 are condensed from Gen.10.21-31, vv. 24-27 from Gen.11.10-26. **28-33**: From *Abraham* sprang both *Isaac*, the progenitor of the Edomites and Israelites (v. 34), and *Ishmael*, the progenitor of the Arabs (compare Gen.25.1-4,12-18). **34-37**: The Chronicler does not use the personal name Jacob at all, but only the community term, *Israel*. *Esau* (Edom) is given special attention as the brother of *Israel*. **38-42**: *Seir* is another name for Edom (Gen.36.8, 20-30). **43-54**: *The kings . . . of Edom*, compare Gen.36.31-43.

the daughter of Me'zahab. ⁵¹ And Hadad died.

The chiefs of Edom were: chiefs Timna, Al'iah, Jetheth, ⁵² Oholiba'mah, Elah, Pinon, ⁵³ Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ⁵⁴ Mag'di-el, and Iram; these are the chiefs of Edom.

2 These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Is'sachar, Zeb'ulun, ² Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naph'tali, Gad, and Asher. ³ The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, and Shelah; these three Bath-shu'a the Canaanitess bore to him. Now Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he slew him. ⁴ His daughter-in-law Tamar also bore him Perez and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all.

⁵ The sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. ⁶ The sons of Zerah: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara, five in all. ⁷ The sons of Carmi: Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the matter of the devoted thing; ⁸ and Ethan's son was Azari'ah.

⁹ The sons of Hezron, that were born to him: Jerah'meel, Ram, and Chelu'bai. ¹⁰ Ram was the father of Ammin'adab, and Ammin'adab was the father of Nahshon, prince of the sons of Judah. ¹¹ Nahshon was the father of Salma, Salma of Bo'az, ¹² Bo'az of Obed, Obed of Jesse. ¹³ Jesse was the father of Eli'ab his first-born, Abin'adab the second, Shim'ea the third, ¹⁴ Nathan'el the fourth, Raddai the fifth, ¹⁵ Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; ¹⁶ and their sisters were Zeru'iah and Ab'igail. The sons of Zeru'iah: Abi'shai, Jo'ab, and As'ahel, three. ¹⁷ Ab'igail bore Ama'sa, and the father of Ama'sa was Jether the Ish'maelite.

¹⁸ Caleb the son of Hezron had children by his wife Azu'bah, and by Jer'ioth; and these were her sons: Jeshur, Shobab, and Ardon. ¹⁹ When Azu'bah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who bore him Hur. ²⁰ Hur was the father of Uri, and Uri was the father of Bez'alel.

²¹ Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub; ²² and Segub was the father of Ja'ir, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. ²³ But Geshur and Aram took from them Havvoth-ja'ir, Kenath and its villages, sixty towns. All these were descendants of Machir, the father of Gilead. ²⁴ After the death of Hezron, Caleb went in to Eph'rathah, ^a the wife of Hezron his father, and she bore him Ashhur, the father of Teko'a.

²⁵ The sons of Jerah'meel, the first-born of Hezron: Ram, his first-born, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahi'jah. ²⁶ Jerah'meel also had another wife, whose name was At'arah; she was the mother of Onam. ²⁷ The sons of Ram, the first-born of Jerah'meel: Ma'az, Jamin, and Eker. ²⁸ The sons of Onam: Sham'mai and Jada. The sons of Sham'mai: Nadab and Abi'shur. ²⁹ The name of Abi'shur's wife was Ab'ihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. ³⁰ The sons of Nadab: Seled and Ap'pa-im; and Seled died childless. ³¹ The sons of Ap'pa-im: Ishi. The sons of Ishi: Sheshan. The sons of Sheshan: Ahlai. ³² The sons of Jada, Sham'mai's brother: Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died childless. ³³ The sons of Jonathan: Peleth and Zaza. These were the descendants of Jerah'meel. ³⁴ Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters; but Sheshan had an Egyptian slave, whose name was Jarha. ³⁵ So Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage to Jarha his slave; and she bore him Attai. ³⁶ Attai was the father of Nathan and Nathan of Zabad. ³⁷ Zabad was the father of Ephlal, and Ephlal of Obed. ³⁸ Obed was the father of Jehu, and Jehu of Azari'ah. ³⁹ Azari'ah was the father of Helez, and Helez of Ele-a'sah. ⁴⁰ Ele-a'sah was the father of Sismai, and Sismai of Shallum. ⁴¹ Shallum was the father of Jeka-

a Gk Vg: Heb in Caleb Ephrathah

2.1-55: Descendants of Judah. The chief sources are Gen. chs. 35; 38; 46; Num. 1.7; 32.41-42; Jos. chs. 7; 14; 15; Ru. 4.18-22; 1 Sam. 27.10.

mi'ah, and Jekami'ah of Eli'shama.

42 The sons of Caleb the brother of Jerah'meel: Mare'shah^b his first-born, who was the father of Ziph. The sons of Mare'shah: Hebron.^c 43 The sons of Hebron: Korah, Tap'puah, Rekem, and Shema. 44 Shema was the father of Raham, the father of Jor'ke-am; and Rekem was the father of Sham'mai. 45 The son of Sham'mai: Ma'on; and Ma'on was the father of Bethzur. 46 Ephah also, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran was the father of Gazez. 47 The sons of Jah'dai: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Sha'aph. 48 Ma'acah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tir'hanah. 49 She also bore Sha'aph the father of Madman'nah, Sheva the father of Machbe'nah and the father of Gib'e-a; and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah. 50 These were the descendants of Caleb.

The sons^d of Hur the first-born of Eph'rathah: Shobal the father of Kir'iath-je'arim, 51 Salma, the father of Bethlehem, and Hareph the father of Beth-gader. 52 Shobal the father of Kir'iath-je'arim had other sons: Haro'eh, half of the Menu'-hoth. 53 And the families of Kir'iath-je'arim: the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shu'mathites, and the Mish'ra-ites; from these came the Zo'rathites and the Esh'taolites. 54 The sons of Salma: Bethlehem, the Netoph'athites, At'roth-beth-jo'ab, and half of the Man'aha'thites, the Zorites. 55 The families also of the scribes that dwelt at Jabez: the Ti'rathites, the Shim'e-athites, and the Su'cathites. These are the Ken'ites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

3 These are the sons of David that were born to him in Hebron: the first-born Amnon, by Ahin'o-am the Jezreelitess; the second Daniel, by Ab'igail the Car'melitess, 2 the third Ab-

salom, whose mother was Ma'acah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth Adoni'jah, whose mother was Haggith; 3 the fifth Shephati'ah, by Abi'tal; the sixth Ith'ream, by his wife Eglah; 4 six were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned for seven years and six months. And he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem. 5 These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shim'e-a, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, four by Bath-shu'a, the daughter of Am'mi-el; 6 then Ibhar, Eli'shama, Eliph'elet, 7 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhi'a, 8 Eli'shama, Eli'ada, and Eliph'elet, nine. 9 All these were David's sons, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister.

10 The descendants of Solomon: Rehobo'am, Abi'jah his son, Asa his son, Jehosh'aphat his son, 11 Joram his son, Ahazi'ah his son, Jo'ash his son, 12 Amazi'ah his son, Azari'ah his son, Jotham his son, 13 Ahaz his son, Hezeki'ah his son, Manas'seh his son, 14 Amon his son, Josi'ah his son. 15 The sons of Josi'ah: Joha'n'an the first-born, the second Jehoi'akim, the third Zedeki'ah, the fourth Shallum. 16 The descendants of Jehoi'akim: Jeconiah his son, Zedeki'ah his son; 17 and the sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Sheal'tiel his son, 18 Malchi'ram, Pedai'ah, Shenaz'zar, Jekami'ah, Hosh'ama, and Nedabi'ah; 19 and the sons of Pedai'ah: Zerub'babel and Shim'e-i; and the sons of Zerub'babel: Meshul'lam and Hanani'ah, and Shel'o'mith was their sister; 20 and Hashu'bah, Ohel, Berechi'ah, Hasadi'ah, and Ju'shab-he'sed, five. 21 The sons of Hanani'ah: Pelati'ah and Jeshai'ah, his son^e Rephai'ah, his son^e Arnan, his son^e Obadi'ah, his son^e Shecani'ah. 22 The sons of Shecani'ah: Shemai'ah. And the sons of Shemai'ah: Hattush,

^b Gk: Heb Mesha

^c Heb the father of Hebron

^d Gk Vg: Heb son

^e Gk Compare Syr Vg: Heb sons of

3.1-24: The descendants of David are traced down to the Chronicler's own time. These were very important people, even though the dynasty of David had not been restored (compare 2 Sam.3.2-5; 5.13-16; 13.1). Non-biblical sources were also utilized.

Igal, Bari'ah, Neari'ah, and Shaphat, six. ²³ The sons of Neari'ah: Eli-o-e'-nai, Hizki'ah, and Azri'kam, three. ²⁴ The sons of Eli-o-e'-nai: Hod'avi'ah, Eli'ashib, Pelai'ah, Akkub, Joha'nan, Delai'ah, and Ana'ni, seven.

4 The sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. ² Re-ai'-ah the son of Shobal was the father of Jahath, and Jahath was the father of Ahu'mai and Lahad. These were the families of the Zo'rathites. ³ These were the sons of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister was Hazzelepo'ni, ⁴ and Penu'el was the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These were the sons of Hur, the first-born of Eph'rathah, the father of Bethlehem. ⁵ Ashhur, the father of Teko'a, had two wives, Helah and Na'arah; ⁶ Na'arah bore him Ahuz'zam, Hephher, Te'meni, and Ha-ahash'tari. These were the sons of Na'arah. ⁷ The sons of Helah: Zereth, Izhar, and Ethnan. ⁸ Koz was the father of Anub, Zobe'-bah, and the families of Ahar'hel the son of Harum. ⁹ Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." ¹⁰ Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that thou wouldst bless me and enlarge my border, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from harm so that it might not hurt me!" And God granted what he asked. ¹¹ Chelub, the brother of Shuhah, was the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. ¹² Eshton was the father of Bethra'pha, Pase'ah, and Tehin'nah the father of Irna'hash. These are the men of Recah. ¹³ The sons of Kenaz: Oth'-ni-el and Serai'ah; and the sons of Oth'-ni-el: Hathath and Meo'nothai. ¹⁴ Meo'nothai was the father of Ophrah; and Serai'ah was the father of Jo'ab the father of Ge-har'ashim, ^h so-

called because they were craftsmen. ¹⁵ The sons of Caleb the son of Jephun'neh: Iru, Elah, and Na'am; and the sons of Elah: Kenaz. ¹⁶ The sons of Jehal'lelel: Ziph, Ziphah, Tir'-i-a, and As'arel. ¹⁷ The sons of Ezrah: Jether, Mered, Ephher, and Jalon. These are the sons of Bith'i-ah, the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered married;ⁱ and she conceived and bore Miriam, Sham'mai, and Ishbah, the father of Eshtemo'a. ¹⁸ And his Jewish wife bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Soco, and Jeku'thiel the father of Zano'ah. ¹⁹ The sons of the wife of Hodi'ah, the sister of Naham, were the fathers of Kei'lah the Garmite and Eshtemo'a the Ma-ac'athite. ²⁰ The sons of Shimon: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-ha'-nan, and Tilon. The sons of Ishi: Zoheth and Ben-zo'heth. ²¹ The sons of Shelah the son of Judah: Er the father of Lecah, La'adah the father of Mare'shah, and the families of the house of linen workers at Beth-ashbe'a; ²² and Jokim, and the men of Coze'ba, and Jo'ash, and Saraph, who ruled in Moab and returned to Lehem^k (now the records^l are ancient). ²³ These were the potters and inhabitants of Neta'im and Gede'rah; they dwelt there with the king for his work.

²⁴ The sons of Simeon: Nem'uel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Sha'ul; ²⁵ Shalum was his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. ²⁶ The sons of Mishma: Ham'mu-el his son, Zac'cur his son, Shim'e-i his son. ²⁷ Shim'e-i had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers had not many children, nor did all their family multiply like the men of Judah. ²⁸ They dwelt in

^f Gk Compare Vg: Heb *father*

^g Gk Vg: Heb lacks *Meonothai*

^h That is *Valley of craftsmen*

ⁱ The clause: *These are . . . married* is transposed from verse 18

^j Heb lacks and bore

^k Vg Compare Gk: Heb and *Jashubi-lahem*

^l Or *matters*

4.1-43: The descendants of Judah and Simeon. The writer takes a genealogical excursion into the early days of the tribes of Judah and Simeon (compare Jos. chs. 15 and 19). These two tribes were closely related (Gen.29.33,35), and Simeon was finally absorbed into Judah and lost its identity (note its absence in Dt. ch. 33).

Beer-sheba, Mola'dah, Ha'zar-shu'al, ²⁹ Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, ³⁰ Bethu'el, Hormah, Ziklag, ³¹ Beth-mar'caboth, Ha'zar-su'sim, Beth-biri, and Shara'im. These were their cities until David reigned. ³² And their villages were Etam, A'in, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan, five cities, ³³ along with all their villages which were round about these cities as far as Ba'al. These were their settlements, and they kept a genealogical record.

³⁴ Mesho'bab, Jamlech, Joshah the son of Amazi'ah, ³⁵ Jo'el, Jehu the son of Joshibi'ah, son of Serai'ah, son of As'i-el, ³⁶ Eli-o-e'nai, Ja-ako'-bah, Jeshohai'ah, Asai'ah, Ad'i-el, Jesim'iel, Benai'ah, ³⁷ Ziza the son of Shiphi, son of Allon, son of Jedai'ah, son of Shimri, son of Shemai'ah – ³⁸ these mentioned by name were princes in their families, and their fathers' houses increased greatly. ³⁹ They journeyed to the entrance of Gedor, to the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks, ⁴⁰ where they found rich, good pasture, and the land was very broad, quiet, and peaceful; for the former inhabitants there belonged to Ham. ⁴¹ These, registered by name, came in the days of Hezeki'ah, king of Judah, and destroyed their tents and the Me-u'nim who were found there, and exterminated them to this day, and settled in their place, because there was pasture there for their flocks. ⁴² And some of them, five hundred men of the Simeonites, went to Mount Se'ir, having as their leaders Pelati'ah, Ne-ari'ah, Rephai'ah, and Uz'ziel, the sons of Ishi; ⁴³ and they destroyed the remnant of the Amal'ekites that had escaped, and they have dwelt there to this day.

5 The sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel (for he was the first-born;

but because he polluted his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright; ² though Judah became strong among his brothers and a prince was from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph), ³ the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ⁴ The sons of Jo'el: Shemai'ah his son, Gog his son, Shim'e-i his son, ⁵ Micah his son, Re-ai'ah his son, Ba'al his son, ⁶ Be-er'ah his son, whom Til'gath-pilne'ser king of Assyria carried away into exile; he was a chieftain of the Reubenites. ⁷ And his kinsmen by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned: the chief, Je-i'el, and Zechari'ah, ⁸ and Bela the son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Jo'el, who dwelt in Aro'er, as far as Nebo and Ba'al-me'on. ⁹ He also dwelt to the east as far as the entrance of the desert this side of the Euphra'tes, because their cattle had multiplied in the land of Gilead. ¹⁰ And in the days of Saul they made war on the Hagrites, who fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the region east of Gilead.

¹¹ The sons of Gad dwelt over against them in the land of Bashan as far as Sal'ecah: ¹² Jo'el the chief, Shapham the second, Ja'nai, and Shaphat in Bashan. ¹³ And their kinsmen according to their fathers' houses: Michael, Meshul'lam, Sheba, Jo'rai, Jacan, Zi'a, and Eber, seven. ¹⁴ These were the sons of Ab'ihail the son of Huri, son of Jaro'ah, son of Gilead, son of Michael, son of Jeshish'ai, son of Jahdo, son of Buz; ¹⁵ Ahi the son of Ab'di-el, son of Guni, was chief in their fathers' houses; ¹⁶ and they dwelt in

5.1-26: The descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, the tribes located east of the Jordan. **1-10:** Reuben was traditionally connected with Judah (Gen.29.32,35), but by remaining east of the Jordan lost power and influence (Gen.35.22; Dt.33.6). The Joseph tribes (*sons of Joseph*) became dominant (Gen.49.22-26; Dt.33.13-17), yet from Judah sprang a prince, David, the greatest figure of the past, and the prototype of the Messiah to come. **11-17:** Gad was just north of Reuben and seems to have been stronger and more important

Gilead, in Bashan and in its towns, and in all the pasture lands of Sharon to their limits. ¹⁷ All of these were enrolled by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jerobo'am king of Israel.

¹⁸ The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas'seh had valiant men, who carried shield and sword, and drew the bow, expert in war, forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty, ready for service.

¹⁹ They made war upon the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab; ²⁰ and when they received help against them, the Hagrites and all who were with them were given into their hands, for they cried to God in the battle, and he granted their entreaty because they trusted in him. ²¹ They carried off their livestock: fifty thousand of their camels, two hundred and fifty thousand sheep, two thousand asses, and a hundred thousand men alive. ²² For many fell slain, because the war was of God. And they dwelt in their place until the exile.

²³ The members of the half-tribe of Manas'seh dwelt in the land; they were very numerous from Bashan to Ba'al-her'mon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. ²⁴ These were the heads of their fathers' houses: Eph'er,^m Ishi, Eli'el, Az'ri-el, Jeremiah, Hodavi'ah, and Jah'di-el, mighty warriors, famous men, heads of their fathers' houses. ²⁵ But they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. ²⁶ So the God of Israel

stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, the spirit of Til'gath-pilne'ser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, namely, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas'seh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river Gozan, to this day.

6ⁿ The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merar'i. ² The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uz'ziel. ³ The children of Amram: Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abi'hu, Elea'zar, and Ith'amar. ⁴ Elea'zar was the father of Phin'ehas, Phin'ehas of Abishu'a, ⁵ Abishu'a of Bukki, Bukki of Uzzi, ⁶ Uzzi of Zerahi'ah, Zerahi'ah of Merai'oth, ⁷ Merai'oth of Amari'ah, Amari'ah of Ahi'tub, ⁸ Ahi'tub of Zadok, Zadok of Ahim'a-az, ⁹ Ahim'a-az of Azari'ah, Azari'ah of Joha'nan, ¹⁰ and Joha'nan of Azari'ah (it was he who served as priest in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem). ¹¹ Azari'ah was the father of Amari'ah, Amari'ah of Ahi'tub, ¹² Ahi'tub of Zadok, Zadok of Shallum, ¹³ Shallum of Hilki'ah, Hilki'ah of Azari'ah, ¹⁴ Azari'ah of Serai'ah, Serai'ah of Jehoz'adak; ¹⁵ and Jehoz'adak went into exile when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁶ The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merar'i. ¹⁷ And these are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shim'e-i. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and

^m Gk Vg: Heb and Eph'er
ⁿ Ch 5.27 in Heb ^o Ch 6.1 in Heb

(Dt.33.20-21). **18-22:** In this story of the wars of the Transjordanian tribes with their neighbors, we see the tendency to express the greatness of God's people in terms of military might, with figures somewhat exaggerated. **23-26:** To the north of Gad was the *half-tribe of Manasseh*, i.e. the part of Manasseh that remained east of the Jordan (Num.32.33-42). All these tribes were carried into exile by the Assyrians, according to the tradition utilized in these verses (compare 2 Kg.15.29).

6.1-81: The lineage of the Levites. **1-5:** The Levites were an ancient warlike tribe (Gen. 49.5-7) that became a priestly caste (Dt.33.8-10; Jg.17.9-13; 18.19). The line running through Zadok (v. 8; compare 2 Sam.8.17) produced the chief priests, which are here traced down to the Exile (compare Gen.46.11; Ex.6.18-19; Num.26.59-60). **16-48:** Other Levites, not of the privileged priestly family, performed auxiliary duties in the temple, such as singing (*the service of song*, v. 31). *David* is credited with instituting the musical service of the temple as it existed

Uz'ziel.¹⁹ The sons of Merar'i: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers.

²⁰ Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, ²¹ Jo'ah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeath'eraï his son. ²² The sons of Kohath: Ammin'adab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, ²³ Elka'nah his son, Ebi'asaph his son, Assir his son, ²⁴ Tahath his son, Uri'el his son, Uzzi'ah his son, and Sha'ul his son. ²⁵ The sons of Elka'nah: Ama'sai and Ahi'moth, ²⁶ Elka'nah his son, Zophai his son, Nahath his son, ²⁷ Eli'ab his son, Jero'ham his son, Elka'nah his son. ²⁸ The sons of Samuel: Jo'el^p his first-born, the second Abi'jah.^q ²⁹ The sons of Merar'i: Mahli, Libni his son, Shim'e-i his son, Uzzah his son, ³⁰ Shim'e-a his son, Haggi'ah his son, and Asai'ah his son.

³¹ These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark rested there. ³² They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and they performed their service in due order. ³³ These are the men who served and their sons. Of the sons of the Ko'hathites: Heman the singer the son of Jo'el, son of Samuel, ³⁴ son of Elka'nah, son of Jero'ham, son of Eli'el, son of To'ah, ³⁵ son of Zuph, son of Elka'nah, son of Mahath, son of Ama'sai, ³⁶ son of Elka'nah, son of Jo'el, son of Azari'ah, son of Zephani'ah, ³⁷ son of Tahath, son of Assir, son of Ebi'asaph, son of Korah, ³⁸ son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, son of Israel; ³⁹ and his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, namely, Asaph the son of Berechi'ah, son of Shim'e-a, ⁴⁰ son of Michael,

son of Ba-ase'iah, son of Malchi'jah, ⁴¹ son of Ethni, son of Zerah, son of Adai'ah, ⁴² son of Ethan, son of Zimmah, son of Shim'e-i, ⁴³ son of Jahath, son of Gershom, son of Levi. ⁴⁴ On the left hand were their brethren the sons of Merar'i: Ethan the son of Kishi, son of Abdi, son of Malluch, ⁴⁵ son of Hashabi'ah, son of Amazi'ah, son of Hilki'ah, ⁴⁶ son of Amzi, son of Bani, son of Shemer, ⁴⁷ son of Mahli, son of Mushi, son of Merar'i, son of Levi; ⁴⁸ and their brethren the Levites were appointed for all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

⁴⁹ But Aaron and his sons made offerings upon the altar of burnt offering and upon the altar of incense for all the work of the most holy place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. ⁵⁰ These are the sons of Aaron: Elea'zar his son, Phin'ehas his son, Abishu'a his son, ⁵¹ Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahi'ah his son, ⁵² Merai'oth his son, Amari'ah his son, Ahi'tub his son, ⁵³ Zadok his son, Ahim'a-az his son.

⁵⁴ These are their dwelling places according to their settlements within their borders: to the sons of Aaron of the families of Ko'hathites, for theirs was the lot, ⁵⁵ to them they gave Hebron in the land of Judah and its surrounding pasture lands, ⁵⁶ but the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephun'neh. ⁵⁷ To the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of refuge: Hebron, Libnah with its pasture lands, Jattir, Eshtemo'a with its pasture lands, ⁵⁸ Hilan with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands, ⁵⁹ Ashan with its pasture lands,

^p Gk Syr Compare verse 33 and 1 Sam 8.2: Heb lacks Joel
^q Heb and Abijah

in the Chronicler's own day, somewhat as Moses is credited with all the laws in Deuteronomy. Prominent family names associated with these singers were *Heman* (v. 33), *Korah* (v. 37), *Asaph* (v. 39), and *Ethan* (v. 44); see the titles to Pss. 73-83; 88-89. The Chronicler himself probably belonged to one of these groups. **49-53:** To be a priest in the Chronicler's time it was necessary to be a descendant of Aaron; to be a high priest, one had to be a descendant of Zadok. **54-81:** Territory allotted to Levitical clans before the Levites had become a priestly cast supported by other Israelites and thus needing no land (Num.26.62). The main source is Jos. ch. 21.

and Beth-she'mesh with its pasture lands; ⁶⁰ and from the tribe of Benjamin, Geba with its pasture lands, Al'emeth with its pasture lands, and An'athoth with its pasture lands. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen.

⁶¹ To the rest of the Ko'hathites were given by lot out of the family of the tribe, out of the half-tribe, the half of Manas'seh, ten cities. ⁶² To the Gershomites according to their families were allotted thirteen cities out of the tribes of Is'sachar, Asher, Naph'tali, and Manas'seh in Bashan. ⁶³ To the Merar'ites according to their families were allotted twelve cities out of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zeb'ulun. ⁶⁴ So the people of Israel gave the Levites the cities with their pasture lands. ⁶⁵ They also gave them by lot out of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin these cities which are mentioned by name.

⁶⁶ And some of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their territory out of the tribe of E'phraim. ⁶⁷ They were given the cities of refuge: Shechem with its pasture lands in the hill country of E'phraim, Gezer with its pasture lands, ⁶⁸ Jok'me-am with its pasture lands, Beth-hor'on with its pasture lands, ⁶⁹ Ai'jalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rim'mon with its pasture lands, ⁷⁰ and out of the half-tribe of Manas'seh, Aner with its pasture lands, and Bil'e-am with its pasture lands, for the rest of the families of the Ko'hathites.

⁷¹ To the Gershomites were given out of the half-tribe of Manas'seh: Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands and Ash'taroth with its pasture lands; ⁷² and out of the tribe of Is'sachar: Kedesh with its pasture lands, Dab'erath with its pasture lands, ⁷³ Ramoth with its pasture lands, and Anem with

its pasture lands; ⁷⁴ out of the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands, ⁷⁵ Hukok with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands; ⁷⁶ and out of the tribe of Naph'tali: Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands, Ham'mon with its pasture lands, and Kiriatha'im with its pasture lands. ⁷⁷ To the rest of the Merar'ites were allotted out of the tribe of Zeb'ulun: Rim'mono with its pasture lands, Tabor with its pasture lands, ⁷⁸ and beyond the Jordan at Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, out of the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the steppe with its pasture lands, Jahzah with its pasture lands, ⁷⁹ Ked'emoth with its pasture lands, and Meph'a-ath with its pasture lands; ⁸⁰ and out of the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands, Mahana'im with its pasture lands, ⁸¹ Heshbon with its pasture lands, and Jazer with its pasture lands.

⁷ The sons' of Is'sachar: Tola, Pu'ah, Jashub, and Shimron, four. ² The sons of Tola: Uzzi, Rephai'ah, Je'ri-el, Jah'mai, Ibsam, and Shem'uel, heads of their fathers' houses, namely of Tola, mighty warriors of their generations, their number in the days of David being twenty-two thousand six hundred. ³ The sons of Uzzi: Izrahi'ah. And the sons of Izrahi'ah: Michael, Obadi'ah, Jo'el, and Isshi'ah, five, all of them chief men; ⁴ and along with them, by their generations, according to their fathers' houses, were units of the army for war, thirty-six thousand, for they had many wives and sons. ⁵ Their kinsmen belonging to all the families of Is'sachar were in all eighty-seven thousand mighty warriors, enrolled by genealogy.

⁶ The sons of Benjamin: Bela,
r Syr Compare Vg: Heb and to the sons

7.1-40: Descendants of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Ephraim, and Asher. A swift genealogical glance at the northern tribes, which were perhaps of interest to the writer mainly because they served David (v. 2). 6: *Benjamin*, which appears again in the next chapter, may have been confused with Zebulun, which strangely fails to appear here in its proper place (compare Gen.46.17-27; Num.26.23-50; much non-canonical material is also used).

Becher, and Jedi'a-el, three. ⁷ The sons of Bela: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jer'imoth, and Iri, five, heads of fathers' houses, mighty warriors; and their enrollment by genealogies was twenty-two thousand and thirty-four.

⁸ The sons of Becher: Zemi'rah, Jo'ash, Elie'zer, Eli-o-e'nai, Omri, Jer'emoth, Abi'jah, An'athoth, and Al'emeth. All these were the sons of Becher; ⁹ and their enrollment by genealogies, according to their generations, as heads of their fathers' houses, mighty warriors, was twenty thousand two hundred. ¹⁰ The sons of Jedi'a-el: Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan: Je'ush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chena'anah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahish'ahar. ¹¹ All these were the sons of Jedi'a-el according to the heads of their fathers' houses, mighty warriors, seventeen thousand and two hundred, ready for service in war. ¹² And Shuppim and Huppim were the sons of Ir, Hushim the sons of Aher.

¹³ The sons of Naph'tali: Jah'zi-el, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum, the offspring of Bilhah.

¹⁴ The sons of Manas'seh: As'ri-el, whom his Aramean concubine bore; she bore Machir the father of Gilead. ¹⁵ And Machir took a wife for Huppim and for Shuppim. The name of his sister was Ma'acah. And the name of the second was Zeloph'ehad; and Zeloph'ehad had daughters. ¹⁶ And Ma'acah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rakem. ¹⁷ The sons of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, son of Manas'seh. ¹⁸ And his sister Hammo'lechet bore Ishhod, Abi-e'zer, and Mahlah. ¹⁹ The sons of Shemi'da were Ahi'an, Shechem, Likhi, and Ani'am.

²⁰ The sons of E'phraim: Shuthe'lah, and Bered his son, Tahath his son, Ele-a'dah his son, Tahath his son, ²¹ Zabab his son, Shuthe'lah his son, and Ezer and E'le-ad, whom the men of Gath who were born in the land

slew, because they came down to raid their cattle. ²² And E'phraim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. ²³ And E'phraim went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son; and he called his name Beri'ah, because evil had befallen his house. ²⁴ His daughter was She'erah, who built both Lower and Upper Beth-hor'on, and Uzzen-she'erah. ²⁵ Rephah was his son, Resheph his son, Telah his son, Tahan his son, ²⁶ Ladan his son, Ammi'hud his son, Eli'shama his son, ²⁷ Nun his son, Joshua his son. ²⁸ Their possessions and settlements were Bethel and its towns, and eastward Na'aran, and westward Gezer and its towns, Shechem and its towns, and Ayyah and its towns; ²⁹ also along the borders of the Manas'sites, Beth-she'an and its towns, Ta'anach and its towns, Megid'do and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the sons of Joseph the son of Israel.

³⁰ The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beri'ah, and their sister Serah. ³¹ The sons of Beri'ah: Heber and Mal'chi-el, who was the father of Bir'zaith. ³² Heber was the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and their sister Shu'a. ³³ The sons of Japhlet: Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These are the sons of Japhlet. ³⁴ The sons of Shemer his brother: Rohgah, Jehub'bah, and Aram. ³⁵ The sons of Helem his brother: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. ³⁶ The sons of Zophah: Su'ah, Har'nepher, Shu'al, Beri, Imrah, ³⁷ Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Be-e'ra. ³⁸ The sons of Jether: Jephun'neh, Pispah, and Ara. ³⁹ The sons of Ulla: Arah, Han'niel, and Rizi'a. ⁴⁰ All of these were men of Asher, heads of fathers' houses, approved, mighty warriors, chief of the princes. Their number enrolled by genealogies, for service in war, was twenty-six thousand men.

8 Benjamin was the father of Bela his first-born, Ashbel the second, Ahar'ah the third, ² Nohah the fourth,

and Rapha the fifth.³ And Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abi'hud,⁴ Abishu'a, Na'aman, Aho'ah,⁵ Gera, Shephu'phan, and Hiram.⁶ These are the sons of Ehud (they were heads of fathers' houses of the inhabitants of Geba, and they were carried into exile to Mana'hath):⁷ Na'aman,⁸ Ahi'jah, and Gera, that is, Heglam,⁹ who was the father of Uzza and Ahi'hud.⁸ And Shahara'im had sons in the country of Moab after he had sent away Hushim and Ba'ara his wives.⁹ He had sons by Hodesh his wife: Jobab, Zib'i-a, Mesha, Malcam,¹⁰ Je'uz, Sach'i'a, and Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of fathers' houses.¹¹ He also had sons by Hushim: Abi'tub and Elpa'al.¹² The sons of Elpa'al: Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod with its towns,¹³ and Beri'ah and Shema (they were heads of fathers' houses of the inhabitants of Ai'jalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath);¹⁴ and Ahi'o, Shashak, and Jer'emoth.¹⁵ Zebadi'ah, Arad, Eder,¹⁶ Michael, Ishpah, and Joha were sons of Beri'ah.¹⁷ Zebadi'ah, Meshul'lam, Hizki, Heber,¹⁸ Ish'merai, Izli'ah, and Jobab were the sons of Elpa'al.¹⁹ Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi,²⁰ Eli-e'nai, Zil'lethai, Eli'el,²¹ Adai'ah, Bera'i'ah, and Shimrath were the sons of Shim'e-i.²² Ishpan, Eber, Eli'el,²³ Abdon, Zichri, Hanan,²⁴ Hanani'ah, Elam, Anthothi'jah,²⁵ Iphdei'ah, and Penu'el were the sons of Shashak.²⁶ Sham'sherai, Shehari'ah, Athali'ah,²⁷ Ja-areshi'ah, Eli'jah, and Zichri were the sons of Jero'ham.²⁸ These were the heads of fathers' houses, according to their

generations, chief men. These dwelt in Jerusalem.

29 Je-i'el^u the father of Gibeon dwelt in Gibeon, and the name of his wife was Ma'acah.³⁰ His first-born son: Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Ba'al, Nadab,³¹ Gedor, Ahi'o, Zecher,³² and Mikloth (he was the father of Shim'e-ah). Now these also dwelt opposite their kinsmen in Jerusalem, with their kinsmen.³³ Ner was the father of Kish, Kish of Saul, Saul of Jonathan, Mal'chishu'a, Abin'adab, and Esh-ba'al;³⁴ and the son of Jonathan was Mer'ib-ba'al; and Mer'ib-ba'al was the father of Micah.³⁵ The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tare'a, and Ahaz.³⁶ Ahaz was the father of Jeho'addah; and Jeho'addah was the father of Al'emeth, Az'maveth, and Zimri; Zimri was the father of Moza.³⁷ Moza was the father of Bin'e-a; Raphah was his son, Ele-a'sah his son, Azel his son.³⁸ Azel had six sons, and these are their names: Azri'kam, Bo'cheru, Ish'mael, She-ari'ah, Obadi'ah, and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel.³⁹ The sons of Eshek his brother: Ulam his first-born, Je'ush the second, and Eliph'elet the third.⁴⁰ The sons of Ulam were men who were mighty warriors, bowmen, having many sons and grandsons, one hundred and fifty. All these were Benjaminites.

9 So all Israel was enrolled by genealogies; and these are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. And Judah was taken into exile in Babylon because of their unfaithfulness.

² Now the first to dwell again in their

^s Heb and Naaman

^t Or he carried them into exile

^u Compare 9.35: Heb lacks Jeiel

8.1-40: The descendants of Benjamin. Benjamin was given special treatment because Jerusalem (v. 28) belonged traditionally to this tribe (Jos.18.28), and perhaps because from it came Saul (v. 33), who, though disliked by the Chronicler (10.13-14), was nevertheless the first king of Israel and the predecessor of David. Verse 28 is usually taken to mean that there were numerous Benjaminites in Jerusalem in the Chronicler's own time. **33-34:** The names *Eshbaal* and *Meribbaal* are correctly transmitted (see 2 Sam.2.8 n. and 4.4 n.).

9.1-44: The genealogies of families in Jerusalem after the Exile. **1:** *The Book of the Kings of Israel* is not to be confused with the canonical books of Kings (see Introduction). When the northern kingdom fell, the southern kingdom appropriated the name *Israel* (Mic.1.13-15; 2.7; 3.1,9-10). For a further comment on their unfaithfulness, see 2 Chr.36.11-21. **2-16:** These verses have an inexact parallel in Neh.11.3-19, though it is not claimed there that *people of . . .*

possessions in their cities were Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the temple servants. ³ And some of the people of Judah, Benjamin, E'phraim, and Manas'sch dwelt in Jerusalem: ⁴ Uthai the son of Ammi'hud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, from the sons of Perez the son of Judah. ⁵ And of the Shi'lonites: Asai'ah the first-born, and his sons. ⁶ Of the sons of Zerah: Jeu'el and their kinsmen, six hundred and ninety. ⁷ Of the Benjaminites: Sallu the son of Meshul'lam, son of Hodavi'ah, son of Hassenu'ah, ⁸ Ibne'iah the son of Jero'ham, Elah the son of Uzzi, son of Michri, and Meshul'lam the son of Shephati'ah, son of Reu'el, son of Ibni'jah; ⁹ and their kinsmen according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty-six. All these were heads of fathers' houses according to their fathers' houses.

¹⁰ Of the priests: Jedai'ah, Jehoi'arib, Jachin, ¹¹ and Azari'ah the son of Hilki'ah, son of Meshul'lam, son of Zadok, son of Merai'oth, son of Ahi'tub, the chief officer of the house of God; ¹² and Adai'ah the son of Jero'ham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchi'jah, and Ma'asai the son of Ad'i-el, son of Jah'zerah, son of Meshul'lam, son of Meshil'lemith, son of Immer; ¹³ besides their kinsmen, heads of their fathers' houses, one thousand seven hundred and sixty, very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

¹⁴ Of the Levites: Shemai'ah the son of Hasshub, son of Azri'kam, son of Hashabi'ah, of the sons of Merar'i; ¹⁵ and Bakkak'kar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattani'ah the son of Mica, son of Zichri, son of Asaph; ¹⁶ and Obadi'ah the son of Shemai'ah, son of Galal, son of Jedu'thun, and Berechi'ah the son of Asa, son of

Elka'nah, who dwelt in the villages of the Netoph'athites.

¹⁷ The gatekeepers were: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahi'man, and their kinsmen (Shallum being the chief), ¹⁸ stationed hitherto in the king's gate on the east side. These were the gatekeepers of the camp of the Levites. ¹⁹ Shallum the son of Ko're, son of Ebi'asaph, son of Korah, and his kinsmen of his fathers' house, the Ko'rahites, were in charge of the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent, as their fathers had been in charge of the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance. ²⁰ And Phin'chas the son of Elea'zar was the ruler over them in time past; the LORD was with him. ²¹ Zechari'ah the son of Meshelemi'ah was gatekeeper at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ²² All these, who were chosen as gatekeepers at the thresholds, were two hundred and twelve. They were enrolled by genealogies in their villages. David and Samuel the seer established them in their office of trust. ²³ So they and their sons were in charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, that is, the house of the tent, as guards. ²⁴ The gatekeepers were on the four sides, east, west, north, and south; ²⁵ and their kinsmen who were in their villages were obliged to come in every seven days, from time to time, to be with these; ²⁶ for the four chief gatekeepers, who were Levites, were in charge of the chambers and the treasures of the house of God. ²⁷ And they lodged round about the house of God; for upon them lay the duty of watching, and they had charge of opening it every morning.

²⁸ Some of them had charge of the utensils of service, for they were required to count them when they were

Ephraim and Manasseh dwelt in Jerusalem. In earlier times people of these tribes did not live in Jerusalem, but in the Chronicler's time representatives of "all Israel" (the post-exilic Jews) did live there. 17-34: In these paragraphs is developed the idea that *David* established (with the help of *Samuel*) all the arrangements of the temple and its services which were carried on into post-exilic times. Since David did not actually accomplish the building of the temple, he must perforce have utilized *the tent of meeting* (or "tabernacle"), the portable shrine that preceded

brought in and taken out. ²⁹ Others of them were appointed over the furniture, and over all the holy utensils, also over the fine flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, and the spices. ³⁰ Others, of the sons of the priests, prepared the mixing of the spices, ³¹ and Mattithi'ah, one of the Levites, the first-born of Shallum the Ko'rahite, was in charge of making the flat cakes. ³² Also some of their kinsmen of the Ko'hathites had charge of the showbread, to prepare it every sabbath.

³³ Now these are the singers, the heads of fathers' houses of the Levites, dwelling in the chambers of the temple free from other service, for they were on duty day and night. ³⁴ These were heads of fathers' houses of the Levites, according to their generations, leaders, who lived in Jerusalem.

³⁵ In Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Je-i'el, and the name of his wife was Ma'acah, ³⁶ and his first-born son Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Ba'al, Ner, Nadab, ³⁷ Gedor, Ahi'o, Zechari'ah, and Mikloth; ³⁸ and Mikloth was the father of Shim'e-am; and these also dwelt opposite their kinsmen in Jerusalem, with their kinsmen.

³⁹ Ner was the father of Kish, Kish of Saul, Saul of Jonathan, Mal'chishu'a, Abin'adab, and Eshba'al; ⁴⁰ and the son of Jonathan was Mer'ib-ba'al; and Mer'ib-ba'al was the father of Micah. ⁴¹ The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tahr'e-a, and Ahaz; ⁴² and Ahaz was the father of Jarah, and Jarah of Al'emeth, Az'maveth, and Zimri; and Zimri was the father of Moza. ⁴³ Moza was the father of Bin'e-a; and Rephai'ah was his son, Ele-a'sah his son, Azel his son. ⁴⁴ Azel had six sons and these are their names: Azri'kam, Bo'cheru, Ish'mael, She-ari'ah, Obadi'ah, and Hanan; these were the sons of Azel.

10 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilbo'a. ² And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan and Abin'adab and Mal'chishu'a, the sons of Saul. ³ The battle pressed hard upon Saul, and the archers found him; and he was wounded by the archers. ⁴ Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and make sport of me." But his armor-bearer would not; for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword, and fell upon it. ⁵ And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword, and died. ⁶ Thus Saul died; he and his three sons and all his house died together. ⁷ And when all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that the army^w had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

⁸ On the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilbo'a. ⁹ And they stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to their idols and to the people. ¹⁰ And they put his armor in the temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. ¹¹ But when all Ja'besh-gil'ead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹² all the valiant men arose, and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh. And they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

¹³ So Saul died for his unfaithful-

v Compare 8.35: Heb lacks *and Ahaz* w Heb *they*

the temple. **35-44:** The genealogy of the family of Saul is repeated here from 8.29-38 in anticipation of the next chapter.

10.1-14: Saul, the unfaithful predecessor of David. **1-12:** These verses follow closely their source, 1 Sam.31.1-13, except in v. 10. Compare also v. 12 in the two passages. In spite of his dislike of Saul, the Chronicler hesitated to relate the disgraceful exposure of the bodies. **13-14:** The Chronicler brings *Saul* into his story mainly in contrast with *David* to the greater glory of the latter (see 1 Sam.31.10-13 n.). *Medium*, 1 Sam.28.3-25.

ness; he was unfaithful to the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance,¹⁴ and did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD slew him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

|| Then all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron, and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh."² In times past, even when Saul was king, it was you that led out and brought in Israel; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over my people Israel.'³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.

4 And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, that is Jebus, where the Jeb'usites were, the inhabitants of the land.⁵ The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You will not come in here." Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.⁶ David said, "Whoever shall smite the Jeb'usites first shall be chief and commander." And Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah went up first, so he became chief.⁷ And David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David.⁸ And he built the city round about from the Millo in complete circuit; and Jo'ab repaired the rest of the city.⁹ And David became greater and greater, for the LORD of hosts was with him.

10 Now these are the chiefs of David's mighty men, who gave him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, ac-

cording to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.¹¹ This is an account of David's mighty men: Jasho'be-am, a Hach'monite, was chief of the three;^x he wielded his spear against three hundred whom he slew at one time.

12 And next to him among the three mighty men was Elea'zar the son of Dodo, the Aho'hite.¹³ He was with David at Pas-dam'mim when the Philistines were gathered there for battle. There was a plot of ground full of barley, and the men fled from the Philistines.¹⁴ But he^y took his^y stand in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great victory.

15 Three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David at the cave of Adullam, when the army of Philistines was encamped in the valley of Reph'aim.¹⁶ David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem.¹⁷ And David said longingly, "O that some one would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"¹⁸ Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took and brought it to David. But David would not drink of it; he poured it out to the LORD,¹⁹ and said, "Far be it from me before my God that I should do this. Shall I drink the lifeblood of these men? For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.

20 Now Abi'shai, the brother of Jo'ab, was chief of the thirty.^z And he wielded his spear against three hundred men and slew them, and won a

^x Compare 2 Sam 23.8: Heb *thirty* or *captains*

^y Compare 2 Sam 23.12: Heb *they* . . . *their*

^z Syr: Heb *three*

11.1-47: The accession of David, the capture of Jerusalem, and a list of David's mighty warriors. 1-3: Omitting all the problems and troubles of 2 Sam. chs. 1-4, the Chronicler sees David quickly and easily anointed king over all Israel. The source is 2 Sam.5.1-3, except the last phrase, which is condensed from 1 Sam.16.1-13. 4-9: The source is 2 Sam.5.6-10. The additional information on Joab presented here is generally considered to be historical (see 2 Sam.5.6-9 n.). 10-47: The main source of this list is 2 Sam.23.8-39, though additional names of unknown origin are also present.

name beside the three. ²¹ He was the most renowned^a of the thirty,^z and became their commander; but he did not attain to the three.

²² And Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada was a valiant man^b of Kabzeel, a doer of great deeds; he smote two ariels^c of Moab. He also went down and slew a lion in a pit on a day when snow had fallen. ²³ And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits tall. The Egyptian had in his hand a spear like a weaver's beam; but Benai'ah went down to him with a staff, and snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. ²⁴ These things did Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, and won a name beside the three mighty men. ²⁵ He was renowned among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three. And David set him over his bodyguard.

²⁶ The mighty men of the armies were As'ahel the brother of Jo'ab, Elha'nan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, ²⁷ Shammoth of Harod,^d Helez the Pel'onite, ²⁸ Ira the son of Ikkeish of Teko'a, Abi-e'zer of An'athoth, ²⁹ Sib'becai the Hu'shathite, I'lai the Aho'hite, ³⁰ Ma'harai of Netoph'ah, Heled the son of Ba'anah of Netoph'ah, ³¹ Ithai the son of Ribai of Gib'e-ah of the Benjaminites, Benai'ah of Pira'thon, ³² Hurai of the brooks of Ga'ash, Abi'el the Ar'bathite, ³³ Az'maveth of Baha'rum, Eli'ahba of Sha-al'bon, ³⁴ Hashem^e the Gi'zonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Har'arite, ³⁵ Ahi'am the son of Sachar the Har'arite, Eli'phal the son of Ur, ³⁶ Hephher the Meche'rathite, Ahi'jah the Pel'onite, ³⁷ Hezro of Carmel, Na'arai the son of Ezbai, ³⁸ Jo'el the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, ³⁹ Zelek the Ammonite, Na'harai of Be-er'oth, the armor-bearer of Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah, ⁴⁰ Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ⁴¹ Uri'ah the Hittite, Zabab the son of Ahlai, ⁴² Ad'ina

the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a leader of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, ⁴³ Hanan the son of Ma'acah, and Josh'aphat the Mithnite, ⁴⁴ Uzzi'a the Ash'terathite, Shama and Je-i'el the sons of Hotham the Aro'erite, ⁴⁵ Jedi'a-el the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, ⁴⁶ Eli'el the Ma'havite, and Jer'ibai, and Joshua-vi'ah, the sons of El'na-am, and Ithmah the Mo'abite, ⁴⁷ Eli'el, and Obed, and Ja-asi'el the Mezo'ba-ite.

12 Now these are the men who came to David at Ziklag, while he could not move about freely because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men who helped him in war. ² They were bowmen, and could shoot arrows and sling stones with either the right or the left hand; they were Benjaminites, Saul's kinsmen. ³ The chief was Ahi-e'zer, then Jo'ash, both sons of Shema'ah of Gib'e-ah; also Je'zi-el and Pelet the sons of Az'maveth; Ber'acah, Jehu of An'athoth, ⁴ Ishma'iah of Gibeon, a mighty man among the thirty and a leader over the thirty; Jeremiah,^f Jaha'ziel, Joha'nán, Joz'abad of Gede'rah, ⁵ Elu'zai,^g Jer'imoth, Beali'ah, Shemari'ah, Shephati'ah the Har'uphite; ⁶ Elka'nah, Isshi'ah, Az'arel, Jo-e'zer, and Jasho'be-am, the Ko'rahites; ⁷ and Jo-e'lah and Zebadi'ah, the sons of Jero'ham of Gedor.

⁸ From the Gadites there went over to David at the stronghold in the wilderness mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and who were swift as gazelles upon the mountains: ⁹ Ezer the chief, Obadi'ah second, Eli'ab third, ¹⁰ Mishman'nah fourth, Jeremiah fifth, ¹¹ Attai

^z Syr: Heb *three*

^a Compare 2 Sam 23.19: Heb *more renowned among the two*

^b Syr: Heb *the son of a valiant man*

^c The meaning of the word *ariel* is unknown

^d Compare 2 Sam 23.25: Heb *the Harorite*

^e Compare Gk and 2 Sam 23.32: Heb *the sons of Hashem*

^f Heb verse 5 ^g Heb verse 6

12.1-40: David's ability to attract men of valor. A description of David's army. David is linked to the past by historical allusions, yet he is also the prototype of the ideal future king or Messiah. **1-7:** Compare v. 1 with 1 Sam.27.5-12; v. 2 with Jg.3.15 and 20.15-16; v. 4 with 2 Sam.23.18-19. **8-15:** Compare 1 Sam.26.1-3 and Dt.33.20-21. These *Gadites*, like *David*

sixth, Eli'el seventh, ¹² Joha'nān eighth, Elza'bad ninth, ¹³ Jeremiah tenth, Mach'bannai eleventh. ¹⁴ These Gadites were officers of the army, the lesser over a hundred and the greater over a thousand. ¹⁵ These are the men who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it was overflowing all its banks, and put to flight all those in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

¹⁶ And some of the men of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. ¹⁷ David went out to meet them and said to them, "If you have come to me in friendship to help me, my heart will be knit to you; but if to betray me to my adversaries, although there is no wrong in my hands, then may the God of our fathers see and rebuke you." ¹⁸ Then the Spirit came upon Ama'sai, chief of the thirty, and he said,

"We are yours, O David;
and with you, O son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
and peace to your helpers!
For your God helps you."

Then David received them, and made them officers of his troops.

¹⁹ Some of the men of Manas'sēh deserted to David when he came with the Philistines for the battle against Saul. (Yet he did not help them, for the rulers of the Philistines took counsel and sent him away, saying, "At peril to our heads he will desert to his master Saul.") ²⁰ As he went to Ziklag these men of Manas'sēh deserted to him: Adnah, Joz'abad, Jedi'a-el, Michael, Joz'abad, Eli'hu, and Zil'lethai, chiefs of thousands in Manas'sēh. ²¹ They helped David against the band of raiders;^h for they were all mighty men of valor, and were commanders in the army. ²² For from day to day

men kept coming to David to help him, until there was a great army, like an army of God.

²³ These are the numbers of the divisions of the armed troops, who came to David in Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the LORD. ²⁴ The men of Judah bearing shield and spear were six thousand eight hundred armed troops. ²⁵ Of the Simeonites, mighty men of valor for war, seven thousand one hundred. ²⁶ Of the Levites four thousand six hundred. ²⁷ The prince Jehoi'ada, of the house of Aaron, and with him three thousand seven hundred. ²⁸ Zadok, a young man mighty in valor, and twenty-two commanders from his own father's house. ²⁹ Of the Benjaminites, the kinsmen of Saul, three thousand, of whom the majority had hitherto kept their allegiance to the house of Saul. ³⁰ Of the Ephraimites twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valor, famous men in their fathers' houses. ³¹ Of the half-tribe of Manas'sēh eighteen thousand, who were expressly named to come and make David king. ³² Of Is'sachar men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, two hundred chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command. ³³ Of Zeb'ulun fifty thousand seasoned troops, equipped for battle with all the weapons of war, to help Davidⁱ with singleness of purpose. ³⁴ Of Naph'tali a thousand commanders with whom were thirty-seven thousand men armed with shield and spear. ³⁵ Of the Danites twenty-eight thousand six hundred men equipped for battle. ³⁶ Of Asher forty thousand seasoned troops ready for battle. ³⁷ Of the Reubenites and Gadites and the half-tribe

^h Or as officers of his troops
ⁱ Gk: Heb lacks David

himself, are here highly idealized. They are as much soldiers of the future as of the past. **19-22:** The Chronicler's revised version of 1 Sam. chs. 29-30. That *Manasseh deserted to David* in this manner is not historically attested. But in the ideal future, all the tribes, northern as well as southern, would flock to the new David to form *a great army, like an army of God*. **23-37:** The writer now returns to the enthronement scene of 11.1-3. The total number of fighting men listed here is fantastic, historically speaking; but in the new age of the new David, things will

of Manas'seh from beyond the Jordan, one hundred and twenty thousand men armed with all the weapons of war.

38 All these, men of war, arrayed in battle order, came to Hebron with full intent to make David king over all Israel; likewise all the rest of Israel were of a single mind to make David king. 39 And they were there with David for three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had made preparation for them. 40 And also their neighbors, from as far as Is'sachar and Zeb'ulun and Naph'tali, came bringing food on asses and on camels and on mules and on oxen, abundant provisions of meal, cakes of figs, clusters of raisins, and wine and oil, oxen and sheep, for there was joy in Israel.

13 David consulted with the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, with every leader. 2 And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let us send abroad to our brethren who remain in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites in the cities that have pasture lands, that they may come together to us. 3 Then let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we neglected it in the days of Saul." 4 All the assembly agreed to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

5 So David assembled all Israel from the Shihor of Egypt to the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kir'iath-je'arim. 6 And David and all Israel went up to Ba'-

alah, that is, to Kir'iath-je'arim which belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD who sits enthroned above the cherubim. 7 And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, from the house of Abin'adab, and Uzzah and Ahi'o'j were driving the cart. 8 And David and all Israel were making merry before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets.

9 And when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzzah put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. 10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and he smote him because he put forth his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. 11 And David was angry because the LORD had broken forth upon Uzzah; and that place is called Pe'rez-uz'za^k to this day. 12 And David was afraid of God that day; and he said, "How can I bring the ark of God home to me?" 13 So David did not take the ark home into the city of David, but took it aside to the house of O'bed-e'dom the Gittite. 14 And the ark of God remained with the household of O'bed-e'dom in his house three months; and the LORD blessed the household of O'bed-e'dom and all that he had.

14 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also masons and carpenters to

^j Or and his brother

^k That is The breaking forth upon Uzzah

be different. 38-40: In line with the interpretation suggested in the preceding notes, there is in these verses a kind of Messianic banquet (compare Is.25.6-8; Jl.3.18; Mt.26.29; Mk.14.25).

13.1-14: David's concern to bring the ark to Jerusalem. The Chronicler partly reverses the order of 2 Samuel, placing his version of 2 Sam.6.2-11, which is the source of the present chapter, ahead of his treatment of 2 Sam.5.11-25 (in ch. 14). 2 Sam.6.12-19 is then utilized in 15.25-16.3. The purpose of this rearrangement is probably to show the new David's primary concern with ecclesiastical rather than military matters, in spite of his skill in the latter (compare 14.17). 1-4: In the times of the historical David, the distinction between *priests* and *Levites* did not exist. 5: The *Shihor of Egypt*, the eastern branch of the Nile delta; the *entrance of Hamath* was in Syria. The *cherubim*, see 1 Sam.4.4 n.

14.1-17: David's family and his defeat of the Philistines. The source is 2 Sam.5.11-25. The Chronicler adds v. 17 to make his new David (see 12.23-37 n.) a military figure feared throughout the world.

build a house for him.² And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel.

3 And David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters.⁴ These are the names of the children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammu'a, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,⁵ Ibhar, Eli'shu-a, El'pelet,⁶ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhi'a,⁷ Eli'shama, Beeli'ada, and Eliph'elet.

8 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up in search of David; and David heard of it and went out against them.⁹ Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Reph'aim.¹⁰ And David inquired of God, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Wilt thou give them into my hand?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up, and I will give them into your hand."¹¹ And he went up to Ba'al-pera'zim, and David defeated them there; and David said, "God has broken through^l my enemies by my hand, like a bursting flood." Therefore the name of that place is called Ba'al-pera'zim.^m ¹² And they left their gods there, and David gave command, and they were burned.

13 And the Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley.¹⁴ And when David again inquired of God, God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; go around and come upon them opposite the balsam trees."¹⁵ And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out to battle; for God has gone out before you to smite the army of the Philistines."¹⁶ And David did as God commanded him, and they smote the Philistine army from Gibeon to Gezer.¹⁷ And the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.

15 David built houses for himself in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it.² Then David said, "No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to him for ever."³ And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it.⁴ And David gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites:⁵ of the sons of Kohath, Uri'el the chief, with a hundred and twenty of his brethren;⁶ of the sons of Merar'i, Asai'ah the chief, with two hundred and twenty of his brethren;⁷ of the sons of Gershon, Jo'el the chief, with a hundred and thirty of his brethren;⁸ of the sons of Eli-za'phan, Shemai'ah the chief, with two hundred of his brethren;⁹ of the sons of Hebron, Eli'el the chief, with eighty of his brethren;¹⁰ of the sons of Uz'ziel, Ammin'adab the chief, with a hundred and twelve of his brethren.¹¹ Then David summoned the priests Zadok and Abi'athar, and the Levites Uri'el, Asai'ah, Jo'el, Shemai'ah, Eli'el, and Ammin'adab,¹² and said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, so that you may bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it."¹³ Because you did not carry it the first time,ⁿ the LORD our God broke forth upon us, because we did not care for it in the way that is ordained."¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel.¹⁵ And the Levites carried the ark of God upon their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

^l Heb *paraz*

^m That is *Lord of breaking through*

ⁿ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

15.1-29: The ark is brought to Jerusalem. The Chronicler returns to his interest in the new David as an ecclesiastical figure (see ch. 13 n.). 1-15: Note the emphasis on the Levites, who did not exist as a special class in the time of the historical *David*; they are not even mentioned in 2 Sam. ch. 6. 16-24: The musical arrangements here set forth were largely drawn from the

16 David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their brethren as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy. ¹⁷ So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Jo'el; and of his brethren Asaph the son of Berechi'ah; and of the sons of Merar'i, their brethren, Ethan the son of Kusha'iah; ¹⁸ and with them their brethren of the second order, Zechari'ah, Ja-a'ziel, Shemi'ramoth, Jehi'el, Unni, Eli'ab, Benai'ah, Ma-asei'ah, Mattithi'ah, Eliph'elehu, and Miknei'ah, and the gatekeepers O'bed-e'dom and Je-i'el. ¹⁹ The singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were to sound bronze cymbals; ²⁰ Zechari'ah, A'zi-el, Shemi'ramoth, Jehi'el, Unni, Eli'ab, Ma-asei'ah, and Benai'ah were to play harps according to Al'amoth; ²¹ but Mattithi'ah, Eliph'elehu, Miknei'ah, O'bed-e'dom, Je-i'el, and Azazi'ah were to lead with lyres according to the Shem'inith. ²² Chenani'ah, leader of the Levites in music, should direct the music, for he understood it. ²³ Berechi'ah and Elka'nah were to be gatekeepers for the ark. ²⁴ Shebani'ah, Josh'aphat, Nathan'el, Ama'sai, Zechari'ah, Benai'ah, and Elie'zer, the priests, should blow the trumpets before the ark of God. O'bed-e'dom and Jehi'ah also were to be gatekeepers for the ark.

25 So David and the elders of Israel, and the commanders of thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of O'bed-e'dom with rejoicing. ²⁶ And because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. ²⁷ David was clothed

with a robe of fine linen, as also were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers, and Chenani'ah the leader of the music of the singers; and David wore a linen ephod. ²⁸ So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and made loud music on harps and lyres.

29 And as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David dancing and making merry; and she despised him in her heart.

16 And they brought in the ark of God, and set it inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. ² And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD, ³ and distributed to all Israel, both men and women, to each a loaf of bread, a portion of meat,^o and a cake of raisins.

4 Moreover he appointed certain of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁵ Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechari'ah, Je-i'el, Shemi'ramoth, Jehi'el, Mattithi'ah, Eli'ab, Benai'ah, O'bed-e'dom, and Je-i'el, who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, ⁶ and Benai'ah and Jaha'ziel the priests were to blow trumpets continually, before the ark of the covenant of God.

7 Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the LORD by Asaph and his brethren.

^o Compare Gk Syr Vg; Heb uncertain

practice in the Chronicler's own day. These names had become traditional in the musical guild. *Sheminith* (v. 21), a musical term; the exact meaning is unknown. **25-28:** Based upon 2 Sam. 6.12-15, with the addition of Levites, singers, more musical instruments, and more clothing on the person of *David* (see 1 Sam.2.18 n.). **29:** A close approximation of 2 Sam.6.16.

16.1-43: A service of dedication, and further ecclesiastical arrangements. A continuation of ch. 15. **1-3:** Compare 2 Sam.6.17-19 as source. All reference to 2 Sam.6.20-23 is omitted. The new David would not be guilty of indecent exposure (see 15.25-28 n.) or of unseemly disputes with members of his harem. **8-36:** A composite psalm inserted for artistic effect, probably by

- ⁸ O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples!
- ⁹ Sing to him, sing praises to him,
tell of all his wonderful works!
- ¹⁰ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!
- ¹¹ Seek the LORD and his strength,
seek his presence continually!
- ¹² Remember the wonderful works that he has done,
the wonders he wrought, the judgments he uttered,
- ¹³ O offspring of Abraham his servant,
sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!
- ¹⁴ He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
- ¹⁵ He is mindful of his covenant for ever,
of the word that he commanded,
for a thousand generations,
- ¹⁶ the covenant which he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
- ¹⁷ which he confirmed as a statute to Jacob,
as an everlasting covenant to Israel,
- ¹⁸ saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan,
as your portion for an inheritance."
- ¹⁹ When they were few in number,
and of little account, and sojourners in it,
- ²⁰ wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
- ²¹ he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
- ²² saying, "Touch not my anointed ones,
do my prophets no harm!"
- ²³ Sing to the LORD, all the earth!
Tell of his salvation from day to day.
- ²⁴ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!
- ²⁵ For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and he is to be held in awe above all gods.
- ²⁶ For all the gods of the peoples are idols;
but the LORD made the heavens.
- ²⁷ Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his place.
- ²⁸ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!
- ²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come before him!
- Worship the LORD in holy array;
- ³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth;
yea, the world stands firm, never to be moved.
- ³¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,
and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"
- ³² Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,
let the field exult, and everything in it!
- ³³ Then shall the trees of the wood sing for joy
before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.
- ³⁴ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!
- ³⁵ Say also:
"Deliver us, O God of our salvation,
and gather and save us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to thy holy name,
and glory in thy praise.
- ³⁶ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!"

Then all the people said "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

37 So David left Asaph and his brethren there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister continually before the ark as each day required,³⁸ and also O'bed-e'dom and his^p sixty-eight brethren; while O'bed-e'dom, the son of Jedu'thun, and Hosah were to be gatekeepers.³⁹ And he left Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that was at Gibeon,⁴⁰ to offer burnt offerings to the LORD upon the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening, according to all that is written in the law of the LORD which he commanded Israel.⁴¹ With them were Heman and Jedu'thun, and the rest of those chosen and expressly named to give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures for ever.⁴² Heman and Jedu'thun had trumpets and cymbals for the music and instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jedu'thun were appointed to the gate.

43 Then all the people departed each to his house, and David went home to bless his household.

¶ Now when David dwelt in his house, David said to Nathan the prophet, "Behold, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under a tent."² And Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you."

3 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan,⁴ "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: You shall not build me a house to dwell in.'⁵ For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I led up Israel to this day, but I have gone from tent to tent and from dwelling to dwelling.⁶ In all places where I have moved with all Israel, did I speak a word with

any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"⁷ Now therefore thus shall you say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel;⁸ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.'⁹ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall waste them no more, as formerly,¹⁰ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover I declare to you that the LORD will build you a house.¹¹ When your days are fulfilled to go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom.¹² He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne for ever.¹³ I will be his father, and he shall be my son; I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you,¹⁴ but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom for ever and his throne shall be established for ever.'¹⁵ In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

16 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and said, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far?¹⁷ And this was a small thing in thy eyes, O God; thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast shown

p Heb *their*

sition are Ps.105.1-15 (vv. 8-22); Ps.96.1-13 (vv. 23-33); Ps.106.1,47-48 (vv. 34-36). 37-42: A continuation of vv. 4-6; similar to 15.1-24. 43: Taken from 2 Sam.6.19b-20a; a continuation of v. 3.

17.1-27: Why David himself did not build the temple. This chapter follows closely its source, 2 Sam. ch. 7.

me future generations,⁹ O LORD God!
¹⁸ And what more can David say to thee for honoring thy servant? For thou knowest thy servant. ¹⁹ For thy servant's sake, O LORD, and according to thy own heart, thou hast wrought all this greatness, in making known all these great things. ²⁰ There is none like thee, O LORD, and there is no God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. ²¹ What other nation on earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his people, making for thyself a name for great and terrible things, in driving out nations before thy people whom thou didst redeem from Egypt? ²² And thou didst make thy people Israel to be thy people for ever; and thou, O LORD, didst become their God. ²³ And now, O LORD, let the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast spoken; ²⁴ and thy name will be established and magnified for ever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, is Israel's God,' and the house of thy servant David will be established before thee. ²⁵ For thou, my God, hast revealed to thy servant that thou wilt build a house for him; therefore thy servant has found courage to pray before thee. ²⁶ And now, O LORD, thou art God, and thou hast promised this good thing to thy servant; ²⁷ now therefore may it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for what thou, O LORD, hast blessed is blessed for ever."

18 After this David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath and its villages out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he defeated Moab, and the Mo'abites became servants to David and brought tribute.

3 David also defeated Hadade'zer

king of Zobah, toward Hamath, as he went to set up his monument⁹ at the river Euphra'tes. ⁴ And David took from him a thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers; and David hamstringed all the chariot horses, but left enough for a hundred chariots. ⁵ And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadade'zer king of Zobah, David slew twenty-two thousand men of the Syrians. ⁶ Then David put garrisons⁹ in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought tribute. And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went. ⁷ And David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadade'zer, and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸ And from Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadade'zer, David took very much bronze; with it Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the vessels of bronze.

9 When To'u king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadade'zer, king of Zobah, ¹⁰ he sent his son Hador'am to King David, to greet him, and to congratulate him because he had fought against Hadade'zer and defeated him; for Hadade'zer had often been at war with To'u. And he sent all sorts of articles of gold, of silver, and of bronze; ¹¹ these also King David dedicated to the LORD, together with the silver and gold which he had carried off from all the nations, from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and Am'alek.

12 And Abi'shai, the son of Zeru'iah, slew eighteen thousand E'domites in the Valley of Salt. ¹³ And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the E'domites became David's servants. And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.

⁹ Cn: Heb uncertain

^r Gk Vg: Heb one ^s Heb hand

^t Gk Vg 2 Sam 8.6 Compare Syr: Heb lacks garrisons

18.1-17: David's further military prowess. This chapter and the two following resume the theme of ch. 14 (see note there). The idealized *David* was both a great military leader and a noble founder of religious institutions. **1-13: David defeats the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians**

14 So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and equity to all his people. ¹⁵ And Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah was over the army; and Jehosh'aphat the son of Ahi'lud was recorder; ¹⁶ and Zadok the son of Ahi'tub and Ahim'elech the son of Abi'athar were priests; and Shavsha was secretary; ¹⁷ and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada was over the Cher'ethites and the Pel'ethites; and David's sons were the chief officials in the service of the king.

19 Now after this Nahash the king of the Ammonites died, and his son reigned in his stead. ² And David said, "I will deal loyally with Hanun the son of Nahash, for his father dealt loyally with me." So David sent messengers to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came to Hanun in the land of the Ammonites, to console him. ³ But the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun, "Do you think, because David has sent comforters to you, that he is honoring your father? Have not his servants come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?" ⁴ So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sent them away; ⁵ and they departed. When David was told concerning the men, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."

6 When the Ammonites saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the Ammonites sent a thousand talents of silver to hire chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Aram-ma'acah, and from Zobah. ⁷ They hired thirty-two thousand chariots and the king of

Ma'acah with his army, who came and encamped before Med'eba. And the Ammonites were mustered from their cities and came to battle. ⁸ When David heard of it, he sent Jo'ab and all the army of the mighty men. ⁹ And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, and the kings who had come were by themselves in the open country.

10 When Jo'ab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the picked men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Syrians; ¹¹ the rest of his men he put in the charge of Abi'shai his brother, and they were arrayed against the Ammonites. ¹² And he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will help you. ¹³ Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what seems good to him."

¹⁴ So Jo'ab and the people who were with him drew near before the Syrians for battle; and they fled before him. ¹⁵ And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abi'shai, Jo'ab's brother, and entered the city. Then Jo'ab came to Jerusalem.

16 But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates, with Shophach the commander of the army of Hadade'zer at their head. ¹⁷ And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and crossed the Jordan, and came to them, and drew up his forces against them. And when David set the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him. ¹⁸ And the Syrians

(Arameans), and Edomites. 2 Sam.8.1-14 is the source. 14-17: The source is 2 Sam.8.15-18. 17: *David's sons* are changed from priests (see 2 Sam.8.18 n.) to *chief officials*, for the Chronicler believed only descendants of Aaron could be priests.

19.1-19: David defeats the Ammonites and their Syrian (Aramean) allies. The Chronicler omits 2 Sam. ch. 9, having already declared (10.6) that the whole house of Saul had disappeared. The theme of David's military prowess is continued, the source being 2 Sam. ch. 10 with a few changes.

fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians the men of seven thousand chariots, and forty thousand foot soldiers, and killed also Shophach the commander of their army. ¹⁹ And when the servants of Hadade'zer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David, and became subject to him. So the Syrians were not willing to help the Ammonites any more.

20 In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, Jo'ab led out the army, and ravaged the country of the Ammonites, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. And Jo'ab smote Rabbah, and overthrew it. ² And David took the crown of their king^u from his head; he found that it weighed a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city, a very great amount. ³ And he brought forth the people who were in it, and set them to labor^v with saws and iron picks and axes;^w and thus David did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

4 And after this there arose war

with the Philistines at Gezer; then Sib'becai the Hu'shathite slew Sip'pai, who was one of the descendants of the giants; and the Philistines were subdued. ⁵ And there was again war with the Philistines; and Elha'nán the son of Ja'ir slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. ⁶ And there was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was descended from the giants. ⁷ And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shim'e-a, David's brother, slew him. ⁸ These were descended from the giants in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

21 Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to number Israel. ² So David said to Jo'ab and the commanders of the army, "Go, number Israel, from Beer-sheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number." ³ But Jo'ab said, "May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of

^u Or *Milcom* See 1 Kg 11.5

^v Compare 2 Sam 12.31: Heb *he sawed*

^w Compare 2 Sam 12.31: Heb *saws*

20.1-8: The conquest of Ammon; further wars with the Philistines. 1: The first two sentences of this verse come from 2 Sam. 11.1; to get the last sentence the Chronicler turned to 2 Sam. 12.26, thus eliminating the story of David's adultery with Bathsheba, his murder of her husband, and the prophet's rebuke of the king for his conduct. The omission is perfectly in order, since the Chronicler was not writing history, and the new David in the new age would certainly not be guilty of such conduct, nor would a prophet have occasion to rebuke him. 2-3: The source is 2 Sam. 12.30-31 (see 2 Sam. 12.30 n.). 4-8: The writer now jumps to 2 Sam. 21.18-22 for source material, thus eliminating a whole series of discreditable incidents: the violent and immoral conduct of David's sons, Absalom's rebellion, David's flight and weak sentimentality, the disaffection of the northern tribes, Joab's control over David; the execution of more of Saul's descendants. 5: The addition of the words *Lahmi the brother of* would seem to be for the purpose of resolving the conflict between 1 Sam. ch. 17 and 2 Sam. 21.19 as to who killed Goliath (see 1 Sam. 17.4 n.).

21.1-22.1: The census, the plague, and the acquisition of a site for the sanctuary. This story, based upon 2 Sam. ch. 24, though not altogether to the credit of David, was used by the Chronicler as the introduction to the next section of his book because the outcome of the trouble in the story was the fixing of the temple site, and the Chronicler from here on is concerned with David as the real founder of the temple. 1: *Satan* replaces "the anger of the LORD" of 2 Sam. 24.1. During the more than five hundred years since the writing of the earlier account, a considerable theological change had taken place. In the thinking of Biblical men, God came to be considered as doing only good; and the figure of Satan (the word means "adversary") was developed to account for evil and misfortune (compare Rev. 12.9). For earlier conceptions of

them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should he bring guilt upon Israel?"⁴ But the king's word prevailed against Jo'ab. So Jo'ab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came back to Jerusalem.⁵ And Jo'ab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and in Judah four hundred and seventy thousand who drew the sword.⁶ But he did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, for the king's command was abhorrent to Jo'ab.

⁷ But God was displeased with this thing, and he smote Israel.⁸ And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, I pray thee, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."⁹ And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,¹⁰ "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you; choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"¹¹ So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Take which you will:¹² either three years of famine; or three months of devastation by your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you; or else three days of the sword of the LORD, pestilence upon the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."¹³ Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is very great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

¹⁴ So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel; and there fell seventy thousand men of Israel.¹⁵ And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but when he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he repented of

the evil; and he said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jeb'usite.¹⁶ And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.¹⁷ And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave command to number the people? It is I who have sinned and done very wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be against me and against my father's house; but let not the plague be upon thy people."

¹⁸ Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and rear an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jeb'usite.¹⁹ So David went up at Gad's word, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD.²⁰ Now Ornan was threshing wheat; he turned and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves.²¹ As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David and went forth from the threshing floor, and did obeisance to David with his face to the ground.²² And David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the LORD—give it to me at its full price—that the plague may be averted from the people."²³ Then Ornan said to David, "Take it; and let my lord the king do what seems good to him; see, I give the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for a cereal offering. I give it all."²⁴ But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will buy it for the full price; I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings which cost me nothing."²⁵ So David

Satan, see 1 Kg.22.19-22; Zech.3.1-2; Job 1.6-2.10. **5:** The numbers are somewhat different in 2 Sam.24.9. **6:** *Levi*, compare Num.1.47-49. **15:** *Ornan*, Araunah in 2 Sam.24.16-24. **20:** The *four sons* do not appear in 2 Sam.24.19-20. **25:** The modest price of fifty shekels of silver (see 2 Sam.24.18-25 n.) is here raised to the very large sum of *six hundred shekels of gold*, perhaps

paid Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the site. ²⁶ And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD, and he answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering. ²⁷ Then the LORD commanded the angel; and he put his sword back into its sheath.

28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jeb'usite, he made his sacrifices there. ²⁹ For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon; ³⁰ but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD. ¹ Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

2 David commanded to gather together the aliens who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God. ³ David also provided great stores of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing, ⁴ and cedar timbers without number; for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought great quantities of cedar to David. ⁵ For David said, "Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be

built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands; I will therefore make preparation for it." So David provided materials in great quantity before his death.

6 Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁷ David said to Solomon, "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. ⁸ But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me upon the earth. ⁹ Behold, a son shall be born to you; he shall be a man of peace. I will give him peace from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. ¹⁰ He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel for ever.' ¹¹ Now, my son, the LORD be with you, so that you may succeed in building the house of the LORD your God, as he has spoken concerning you. ¹² Only, may the LORD grant you discretion and understanding, that when he gives you charge over Israel you may keep the law of the LORD your God. ¹³ Then you will prosper if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD commanded Moses for Israel. Be strong, and of good courage. Fear not;

the equivalent of ten thousand dollars. The author is telling his readers that no price was too great for this precious site. **26:** The *fire from heaven* is lacking in the original account; it is a symbol of God's strong approval (compare 1 Kg. 18.36-39). **28-30:** These verses, not in 2 Sam. ch. 24, are designed to show that there is now only one true place of sacrifice. **22.1:** A continuation of the preceding verses. The source, 2 Sam. ch. 24, identified the site as that of *the altar*, but said nothing about *the house of the LORD God*.

22.2-19: David makes preparations for the construction of the temple. According to the earlier record, David may have thought of building a temple (1 Kg. 5.2-6), but it was Solomon who made and executed the plans, with the aid of Hiram of Tyre (1 Kg. chs. 5-7). The Chronicler regarded the temple as Judaism's greatest institution, and the new David as his nation's most important human figure. This figure and this institution must, therefore, be brought together. **2:** The reference to forced labor of *aliens* only may be based on 1 Kg. 9.22, which overlooks 1 Kg. 5.13; 11.28; 12.4. **3-5:** See 1 Kg. ch. 5, where this preparatory activity is credited to Solomon. **6-12:** Compare 1 Kg. 8.17-21. **8:** *Blood and . . . wars*, compare 1 Kg. 5.3. **13:** Compare

be not dismayed. ¹⁴ With great pains I have provided for the house of the LORD a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weighing, for there is so much of it; timber and stone too I have provided. To these you must add. ¹⁵ You have an abundance of workmen: stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and all kinds of craftsmen without number, skilled in working ¹⁶ gold, silver, bronze, and iron. Arise and be doing! The LORD be with you!"

¹⁷ David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, ¹⁸ "Is not the LORD your God with you? And has he not given you peace on every side? For he has delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD and his people. ¹⁹ Now set your mind and heart to seek the LORD your God. Arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy vessels of God may be brought into a house built for the name of the LORD."

23 When David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

² David assembled all the leaders of Israel and the priests and the Levites. ³ The Levites, thirty years old and upward, were numbered, and the total was thirty-eight thousand men. ⁴ "Twenty-four thousand of these," David said, "shall have charge of the work in the house of the LORD, six thousand shall be officers and judges, ⁵ four thousand gatekeepers, and four

thousand shall offer praises to the LORD with the instruments which I have made for praise." ⁶ And David organized them in divisions corresponding to the sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.

⁷ The sons of Gershom^x were Ladan and Shim'e-i. ⁸ The sons of Ladan: Jehi'el the chief, and Zetham, and Jo'el, three. ⁹ The sons of Shim'e-i: Shelo'moth, Ha'zi-el, and Haran, three. These were the heads of the fathers' houses of Ladan. ¹⁰ And the sons of Shim'e-i: Jahath, Zina, and Je'ush, and Beri'ah. These four were the sons of Shim'e-i. ¹¹ Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second; but Je'ush and Beri'ah had not many sons, therefore they became a father's house in one reckoning.

¹² The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uz'ziel, four.

¹³ The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. Aaron was set apart to consecrate the most holy things, that he and his sons for ever should burn incense before the LORD, and minister to him and pronounce blessings in his name for ever. ¹⁴ But the sons of Moses the man of God were named among the tribe of Levi. ¹⁵ The sons of Moses: Gershom and Elie'zer. ¹⁶ The sons of Gershom: Sheb'uel the chief. ¹⁷ The sons of Elie'zer: Rehabi'ah the chief; Elie'zer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabi'ah were very many. ¹⁸ The sons of Izhar: Shelo'mith the chief. ¹⁹ The sons of Hebron: Jeri'ah the chief, Amari'ah the second, Jaha'ziel the third, and

^x Vg Compare Gk Syr: Heb to the Gershonite

1 Kg.2.2. **14:** The amount of *gold* and *silver* is fantastically large (value estimated at five billion dollars). It is not to be taken literally, but as a figure of speech expressing the inestimable preciousness of the temple as a religious institution. Compare the more modest figures in 1 Kg.9.14,28; 10.10,14.

23.1-32: David organizes the Levites and assigns them their duties. In the time of the historical David there was no special class of Levites (see notes on ch. 6). But to the Chronicler and in his time, more than five hundred years later, they were very important (see Introduction); hence they must be brought into relationship with David. **1:** This single verse moves swiftly all the way from 1 Kg.1.1 to 1 Kg.2.1. **2-6:** On the use of men *thirty years old and upward*, compare Num.4.3; this was apparently older practice (but see Num.8.24). When more elaborate ritual required more men, the age for beginning service was apparently lowered to *twenty years*, as in vv. 24,27. On the *instruments*, see ch. 26, and compare Am.6.5. **7-21:** These

Jekame'am the fourth.²⁰ The sons of Uz'ziel: Micah the chief and Isshi'ah the second.

21 The sons of Merar'i: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Elea'zar and Kish.²² Elea'zar died having no sons, but only daughters; their kinsmen, the sons of Kish, married them.²³ The sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, and Jer'emoth, three.

24 These were the sons of Levi by their fathers' houses, the heads of fathers' houses as they were registered according to the number of the names of the individuals from twenty years old and upward who were to do the work for the service of the house of the LORD.²⁵ For David said, "The LORD, the God of Israel, has given peace to his people; and he dwells in Jerusalem for ever."²⁶ And so the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the things for its service"—²⁷ for by the last words of David these were the number of the Levites from twenty years old and upward—²⁸ "but their duty shall be to assist the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, having the care of the courts and the chambers, the cleansing of all that is holy, and any work for the service of the house of God;²⁹ to assist also with the showbread, the flour for the cereal offering, the wafers of unleavened bread, the baked offering, the offering mixed with oil, and all measures of quantity or size.³⁰ And they shall stand every morning, thanking and praising the LORD, and likewise at evening,³¹ and whenever burnt offerings are offered to the LORD on sabbaths, new moons, and feast days, according to the number required of them, continually before the LORD.³² Thus they shall

keep charge of the tent of meeting and the sanctuary, and shall attend the sons of Aaron, their brethren, for the service of the house of the LORD."

24 The divisions of the sons of Aaron were these. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abi'hu, Elea'zar, and Ith'amar.² But Nadab and Abi'hu died before their father, and had no children, so Elea'zar and Ith'amar became the priests.³ With the help of Zadok of the sons of Elea'zar, and Ahim'elech of the sons of Ith'amar, David organized them according to the appointed duties in their service.⁴ Since more chief men were found among the sons of Elea'zar than among the sons of Ith'amar, they organized them under sixteen heads of fathers' houses of the sons of Elea'zar, and eight of the sons of Ith'amar.⁵ They organized them by lot, all alike, for there were officers of the sanctuary and officers of God among both the sons of Elea'zar and the sons of Ith'amar.⁶ And the scribe Shemai'ah the son of Nethan'el, a Levite, recorded them in the presence of the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahim'elech the son of Abi'athar, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and of the Levites; one father's house being chosen for Elea'zar and one chosen for Ith'amar.

7 The first lot fell to Jehoi'arib, the second to Jedai'ah,⁸ the third to Harim, the fourth to Se-o'rim,⁹ the fifth to Malchi'jah, the sixth to Mij'amin,¹⁰ the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abi'jah,¹¹ the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecani'ah,¹² the eleventh to Eli'ashib, the twelfth to Jakim,¹³ the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jesheb'e-ab,¹⁴ the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Im-

verses were probably inspired by Num. chs. 3; 4; 8, at least in part. **24-32:** The new duties of the Levites are here more carefully defined.

24.1-31: David organizes the priests. David organized not only the Levites (ch. 23), but also the priests. Thus the highest ecclesiastical activity stemmed from the new David. **1-6:** See Num.3.2-4. **3:** *Zadok . . . and Ahimelech*, this should read "Zadok . . . and Abiathar"; compare vv. 6,31; 18.16; see also 2 Sam.8.16-18 n. **4:** The priests, at least in theory, were organized into twenty-four groups or divisions. **7-19:** A detailed exposition of the twenty-four divisions as they were or should have been in the Chronicler's own day. On the division of Abijah, see

mer, ¹⁵ the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Hap'pizzaz, ¹⁶ the nineteenth to Pethahí'ah, the twentieth to Jehez'kel, ¹⁷ the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, ¹⁸ the twenty-third to Delai'ah, the twenty-fourth to Ma-azi'ah. ¹⁹ These had as their appointed duty in their service to come into the house of the LORD according to the procedure established for them by Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

²⁰ And of the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shu'ba-el; of the sons of Shu'ba-el, Jehde'iah. ²¹ Of Rehabí'ah: of the sons of Rehabí'ah, Isshí'ah the chief. ²² Of the Iz'harites, Shelo'moth; of the sons of Shelo'moth, Jahath. ²³ The sons of Hebron: ^y Jerí'ah the chief, ^z Amari'ah the second, Jaha'ziel the third, Jekame'am the fourth. ²⁴ The sons of Uz'ziel, Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. ²⁵ The brother of Micah, Isshí'ah; of the sons of Isshí'ah, Zechari'ah. ²⁶ The sons of Merar'i: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Ja-azi'ah: Beno. ²⁷ The sons of Merar'i: of Ja-azi'ah, Beno, Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri. ²⁸ Of Mahli: Elea'zar, who had no sons. ²⁹ Of Kish, the sons of Kish: Jerah'meel. ³⁰ The sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, and Jer'imoth. These were the sons of the Levites according to their fathers' houses. ³¹ These also, the head of each father's house and his younger brother alike, cast lots, just as their brethren the sons of Aaron, in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahim'elech, and the heads of fathers' houses of the priests and of the Levites.

25 David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the

service certain of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jedu'thun, who should prophesy with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals. The list of those who did the work and of their duties was: ² Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethani'ah, and Ashare'lah, sons of Asaph, under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied under the direction of the king. ³ Of Jedu'thun, the sons of Jedu'thun: Gedali'ah, Zeri, Jeshai'ah, Shim'e-i, ^a Hashabi'ah, and Mattithi'ah, six, under the direction of their father Jedu'thun, who prophesied with the lyre in thanksgiving and praise to the LORD. ⁴ Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukki'ah, Mattani'ah, Uz'ziel, Shebu'el, and Jer'imoth, Hanani'ah, Hana'ni, Eli'athah, Giddal'ti, and Romam'ti-e'zer, Joshbekash'ah, Mallo'thi, Hothir, Maha'zi-oth. ⁵ All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer, according to the promise of God to exalt him; for God had given Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. ⁶ They were all under the direction of their father in the music in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jedu'thun, and Heman were under the order of the king. ⁷ The number of them along with their brethren, who were trained in singing to the LORD, all who were skilful, was two hundred and eighty-eight. ⁸ And they cast lots for their duties, small and great, teacher and pupil alike.

⁹ The first lot fell for Asaph to Joseph; the second to Gedali'ah, to him and his brethren and his sons, twelve; ¹⁰ the third to Zaccur, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹¹ the

^y See 23.19: Heb lacks *Hebron*

^z See 23.19: Heb lacks *the chief*

^a One Ms: Gk: Heb lacks *Shimei*

Lk.1.5. 20-31: A supplementary list of Levites, having some names in common with 23.7-23.

25.1-31: David organizes the musicians. 1-8: Corresponding to the twenty-four divisions of priests (ch. 24) are projected twenty-four divisions of musicians, arranged under three great names, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (compare 6.31-48; 15.16-24; 16.4-7,37-42; 23.5). Here Jeduthun takes the place of Ethan in some of the other lists. According to 23.5 the total number of musicians was thought to be four thousand but here (v. 7) only *two hundred and eighty-eight* (24×12) are considered. For a more primitive use of music by a *seer* (v. 5) in order that he might be aided to *prophesy* (v. 1), see 2 Kg.3.15; for a still more primitive example, see 1 Sam.10.5. 9-31: This is a highly artificial alternating arrangement of the names of vv. 2-4.

fourth to Izri, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹² the fifth to Nethani'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹³ the sixth to Bukki'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹⁴ the seventh to Jeshare'lah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹⁵ the eighth to Jeshai'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹⁶ the ninth to Mattani'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹⁷ the tenth to Shim'e-i, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹⁸ the eleventh to Az'arel, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ¹⁹ the twelfth to Hashabi'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²⁰ to the thirteenth, Shu'ba-el, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²¹ to the fourteenth, Mattithi'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²² to the fifteenth, to Jer'emoth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²³ to the sixteenth, to Hanani'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²⁴ to the seventeenth, to Joshbekash'ah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²⁵ to the eighteenth, to Hana'ni, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²⁶ to the nineteenth, to Mallo'thi, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²⁷ to the twentieth, to Eli'athah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²⁸ to the twenty-first, to Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ²⁹ to the twenty-second, to Giddal'ti, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ³⁰ to the twenty-third, to Maha'zi-oth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; ³¹ to the twenty-fourth, to Romam'ti-e'zer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

26 As for the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Ko'rahites, Meshelemi'ah the son of Ko're, of the sons of Asaph. ² And Meshelemi'ah had sons: Zechari'ah the first-born, JEDI'a-el the second, Zebadi'ah the

third, Jath'ni-el the fourth, ³ Elam the fifth, Jehoha'nán the sixth, Eli-e-ho-e'-nai the seventh. ⁴ And O'bed-e'dom had sons: Shemai'ah the first-born, Jehoz'abad the second, Jo'ah the third, Sachar the fourth, Nethan'el the fifth, ⁵ Am'mi-el the sixth, Is'sachar the seventh, Pe-ul'lethai the eighth; for God blessed him. ⁶ Also to his son Shemai'ah were sons born who were rulers in their fathers' houses, for they were men of great ability. ⁷ The sons of Shemai'ah: Othni, Reph'a-el, Obed, and Elza'bad, whose brethren were able men, Eli'hu and Semachi'ah. ⁸ All these were of the sons of O'bed-e'dom with their sons and brethren, able men qualified for the service; sixty-two of O'bed-e'dom. ⁹ And Meshelemi'ah had sons and brethren, able men, eighteen. ¹⁰ And Hosah, of the sons of Merar'i, had sons: Shimri the chief (for though he was not the first-born, his father made him chief), ¹¹ Hilki'ah the second, Tebali'ah the third, Zechari'ah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen.

¹² These divisions of the gatekeepers, corresponding to their chief men, had duties, just as their brethren did, ministering in the house of the LORD; ¹³ and they cast lots by fathers' houses, small and great alike, for their gates. ¹⁴ The lot for the east fell to Shelemi'ah. They cast lots also for his son Zechari'ah, a shrewd counselor, and his lot came out for the north. ¹⁵ O'bed-e'dom's came out for the south, and to his sons was allotted the storehouse. ¹⁶ For Shuppim and Hosah it came out for the west, at the gate of Shal'lecheth on the road that goes up.

Some of the names also seem artificial, since the last seven or eight of them are formed from words often used in prayer: "be gracious," "I magnify," "I exalt," "fulfil," "abundantly," "visions."

26.1-32: Organization of the gatekeepers, treasurers, and other functionaries. The Chronicler concludes his presentation of the organization of the Levites in the service of the temple (compare 9.17-27; 15.23-24; 16.37-42; Ps.84.10). **1-11:** It is obvious from such names as *Korahites* (6.37), *Asaph* (6.39), and *Obed-edom* (15.21) that the gatekeepers were considered to be closely related to the musicians. All told there were four thousand (23.5), though only ninety-three (62 + 18 + 13, vv. 8.9,11) are considered here. **12-19:** Here the Chronicler forgets entirely his historical pose and describes the temple as it is in his time, mentioning the four sides on the *east*,

Watch corresponded to watch. ¹⁷ On the east there were six each day,^b on the north four each day, on the south four each day, as well as two and two at the storehouse; ¹⁸ and for the parbar^c on the west there were four at the road and two at the parbar. ¹⁹ These were the divisions of the gatekeepers among the Ko'rahites and the sons of Merar'i.

²⁰ And of the Levites, Ahi'jah had charge of the treasures of the house of God and the treasures of the dedicated gifts. ²¹ The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to Ladan, the heads of the fathers' houses belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehi'eli.^d

²² The sons of Jehi'eli, Zetham and Jo'el his brother, were in charge of the treasures of the house of the LORD. ²³ Of the Am'ramites, the Iz'harites, the He'bronites, and the Uzzi'elites—²⁴ and Sheb'uel the son of Gershom, son of Moses, was chief officer in charge of the treasures. ²⁵ His brethren: from Elie'zer were his son Rehabi'ah, and his son Jeshai'ah, and his son Joram, and his son Zichri, and his son Shelo'moth. ²⁶ This Shelo'moth and his brethren were in charge of all the treasures of the dedicated gifts which David the king, and the heads of the fathers' houses, and the officers of the thousands and the hundreds, and the commanders of the army, had dedicated. ²⁷ From spoil won in battles they dedicated gifts for the maintenance of the house of the LORD. ²⁸ Also all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah had dedicated—all dedicated gifts were in the care of Shelo'moth^e and his brethren.

²⁹ Of the Iz'harites, Chenani'ah and his sons were appointed to outside duties for Israel, as officers and judges. ³⁰ Of the He'bronites, Hashabi'ah and his brethren, one thousand seven hundred men of ability, had the oversight of Israel westward of the Jordan for all the work of the LORD and for the service of the king. ³¹ Of the He'bronites, Jeri'jah was chief of the He'bronites of whatever genealogy or fathers' houses. (In the fortieth year of David's reign search was made and men of great ability among them were found at Jazer in Gilead.) ³² King David appointed him and his brethren, two thousand seven hundred men of ability, heads of fathers' houses, to have the oversight of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manas'sites for everything pertaining to God and for the affairs of the king.

27 This is the list of the people of Israel, the heads of fathers' houses, the commanders of thousands and hundreds, and their officers who served the king in all matters concerning the divisions that came and went, month after month throughout the year, each division numbering twenty-four thousand:

¹ 2 Jasho'beam the son of Zab'di-el was in charge of the first division in the first month; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ³ He was a descendant of Perez, and was chief of all the commanders of the army for the first month. ⁴ Dodai the Aho'hite^f was in charge of the division of the second month; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁵ The third

^b Gk: Heb *Levites*

^c The meaning of the word *parbar* is unknown

^d The Hebrew text of verse 21 is confused

^e Heb *Shelomith*

^f Gk: Heb *Ahohite* and his division and Mikloth the chief officer

north, south, and west; also the gates (v. 13), even giving the name of one (v. 16). **26:** Compare Num.31.48–54. **29–32:** Those appointed to outside duties were to look after the interests of the religious establishment in all the rest of the idealized nation.

27.1–34: David organizes military and civil affairs. The arbitrary numerical schemes already applied to the clergy (23.4–5; 24.4; 25.9–31) are extended to the military and other groups. **1:** The total number of the king's bodyguard, 288,000 (12 × 24,000) is historically unrealistic, but entirely in line with the Chronicler's dream of a marvelous future kingdom (see 22.14 n. and contrast the modest figure in 2 Sam.15.18). **2–4:** Compare 11.11–12; 2 Sam.23.8–9. **5:**

commander, for the third month, was Benai'ah, the son of Jehoi'ada the priest, as chief; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁶ This is the Benai'ah who was a mighty man of the thirty and in command of the thirty; Ammiz'abad his son was in charge of his division. ⁷ As'ahel the brother of Jo'ab was fourth, for the fourth month, and his son Zebadi'ah after him; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁸ The fifth commander, for the fifth month, was Shamhuth, the Iz'rahite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁹ Sixth, for the sixth month, was Ira, the son of Ikkeshe the Teko'ite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁰ Seventh, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pel'onite, of the sons of E'phraim; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹¹ Eighth, for the eighth month, was Sib'becai the Hu'shathite, of the Ze'rahites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹² Ninth, for the ninth month, was Abi-e'zer of An'athoth, a Benjaminite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹³ Tenth, for the tenth month, was Ma'harai of Netoph'ah, of the Ze'rahites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁴ Eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Benai'ah of Pira'thon, of the sons of E'phraim; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁵ Twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netoph'athite, of Oth'ni-el; in his division were twenty-four thousand.

¹⁶ Over the tribes of Israel, for the Reubenites Elie'zer the son of Zichri was chief officer; for the Simeonites, Shephati'ah the son of Ma'acah; ¹⁷ for Levi, Hashabi'ah the son of Kem'uel; for Aaron, Zadok; ¹⁸ for Judah, Eli'hu, one of David's brothers; for Is'sachar, Omri the son of Michael; ¹⁹ for Zeb'ulun, Ishma'iah the son of Obadi'ah; for Nap'h'tali, Jer'emoth the

son of Az'riel; ²⁰ for the E'phraimites, Hoshe'a the son of Azazi'ah; for the half-tribe of Manas'seh, Jo'el the son of Pedai'ah; ²¹ for the half-tribe of Manas'seh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechari'ah; for Benjamin, Ja-a'si-el the son of Abner; ²² for Dan, Az'arel the son of Jefo'hani. These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel. ²³ David did not number those below twenty years of age, for the LORD had promised to make Israel as many as the stars of heaven. ²⁴ Jo'ab the son of Zeru'iah began to number, but did not finish; yet wrath came upon Israel for this, and the number was not entered in the chronicles of King David.

²⁵ Over the king's treasures was Az'maveth the son of Ad'i-el; and over the treasures in the country, in the cities, in the villages and in the towers, was Jonathan the son of Uzzi'ah; ²⁶ and over those who did the work of the field for tilling the soil was Ezri the son of Chelub; ²⁷ and over the vineyards was Shim'e-i the Ra'mathite; and over the produce of the vineyards for the wine cellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite. ²⁸ Over the olive and sycamore trees in the Shephe'lai was Ba'al-ha'nani the Gede'rite; and over the stores of oil was Jo'ash. ²⁹ Over the herds that pastured in Sharon was Shitrai the Shar'onite; over the herds in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai. ³⁰ Over the camels was Obil the Ish'maelite; and over the she-asses was Jehde'iah the Meron'othite. Over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagrite. ³¹ All these were stewards of King David's property.

³² Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, being a man of understanding and a scribe; he and Jehi'el the son of Hach'moni attended the king's sons. ³³ Ahith'ophel was the king's counselor, and Hushai the Archite was the

g Gk Vg: Heb was his division

Compare 11.22; 2 Sam.23.20-23. **7:** *Asahel* was killed early in his career (2 Sam.2.18-23); hence his son *Zebadiah* had to take his place. **16-22:** The traditional tribal divisions, obsolete in the Chronicler's day, are regarded as important in dreams of future restoration. **23-24:** Two references to the census of ch. 21. **23:** Compare 22.17. **32-34:** No *Jonathan* who was David's uncle is known elsewhere; perhaps the name here is reminiscent of Saul's son (1 Sam.18.1-4).

king's friend. ³⁴ Ahith'ophel was succeeded by Jehoi'ada the son of Benai'ah, and Abi'athar. Jo'ab was commander of the king's army.

28 David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served the king, the commanders of thousands, the commanders of hundreds, the stewards of all the property and cattle of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty men, and all the seasoned warriors. ² Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brethren and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God; and I made preparations for building. ³ But God said to me, 'You may not build a house for my name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood.' ⁴ Yet the LORD God of Israel chose me from all my father's house to be king over Israel for ever; for he chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah my father's house, and among my father's sons he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel. ⁵ And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) he has chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. ⁶ He said to me, 'It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. ⁷ I will establish his kingdom for ever if he continues resolute in keeping my commandments and my ordinances, as he is today.' ⁸ Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the

LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God; that you may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you for ever.

9 "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever. ¹⁰ Take heed now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it."

11 Then David gave Solomon his son the plan of the vestibule of the temple, and of its houses, its treasuries, its upper rooms, and its inner chambers, and of the room for the mercy seat; ¹² and the plan of all that he had in mind for the courts of the house of the LORD, all the surrounding chambers, the treasuries of the house of God, and the treasuries for dedicated gifts; ¹³ for the divisions of the priests and of the Levites, and all the work of the service in the house of the LORD; for all the vessels for the service in the house of the LORD, ¹⁴ the weight of gold for all golden vessels for each service, the weight of silver vessels for each service, ¹⁵ the weight of the golden lampstands and their lamps, the weight of gold for each lampstand and its lamps, the weight of silver for a lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand in the service, ¹⁶ the weight of gold for each table for the showbread, the silver for the

This *Jehiel* is otherwise unknown. *Ahithophel* (2 Sam. 15.31; 16.23; 17.23) and *Hushai the Archite* (2 Sam. 15.32-37; 16.16-19; 17.5-16) were well-known historical characters. *Jehoiada the son of Benaiah*, the reverse of the names in v. 5; probably correct, as boys were often named after their grandfathers. *Abiathar* is doubtless the priest (compare 1 Sam. 22.20-23). *Joab*, see 2 Sam. 2.12-17 n.

28.1-21: David transmits the final plans for the temple to Solomon. **1-8:** Compare 22.2-19 and 23.1, where the new David's resolve to name Solomon his successor and to turn the temple plans over to him is already set forth (see 22.2-19 n.). Here a great assembly is called to carry out the resolve. **2:** Compare Ps. 132. **3:** See 22.6-12 n. **6-8:** Compare 17.11-14; 22.9-10; Dt. 4.5. **9-10:** Compare Dt. 4.25-31. **11-19:** The Chronicler must make his point that David is much greater than Solomon, and that all these things were done in accordance with the divine will.

silver tables, ¹⁷ and pure gold for the forks, the basins, and the cups; for the golden bowls and the weight of each; for the silver bowls and the weight of each; ¹⁸ for the altar of incense made of refined gold, and its weight; also his plan for the golden chariot of the cherubim that spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. ¹⁹ All this he made clear by the writing from the hand of the LORD concerning it, ^h all the work to be done according to the plan.

20 Then David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Fear not, be not dismayed; for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished. ²¹ And behold the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and with you in all the work will be every willing man who has skill for any kind of service; also the officers and all the people will be wholly at your command."

29 And David the king said to all the assembly, "Solomon my son, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the work is great; for the palace will not be for man but for the LORD God. ² So I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able, the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, besides great quantities of onyx and stones for setting, antimony, colored stones, all sorts of precious stones, and marble. ³ Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided for the holy house,

I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it to the house of my God: ⁴ three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for overlaying the walls of the house, ⁵ and for all the work to be done by craftsmen, gold for the things of gold and silver for the things of silver. Who then will offer willingly, consecrating himself today to the LORD?"

6 Then the heads of fathers' houses made their freewill offerings, as did also the leaders of the tribes, the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and the officers over the king's work. ⁷ They gave for the service of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and a hundred thousand talents of iron. ⁸ And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD, in the care of Jehi'el the Gershonite. ⁹ Then the people rejoiced because these had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the LORD; David the king also rejoiced greatly.

10 Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed art thou, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. ¹¹ Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. ¹² Both riches and

h Cn: Heb upon me

The golden chariot may have been suggested by Ps.18.10 and Ezek.1.4-21. **19:** David is said to have received plans for the temple in much the same way as Moses traditionally received plans for the tabernacle (Ex. ch. 25). It is not clear whether *the writing* is thought of as done by David or the LORD (compare Ex.24.4,12; 31.18; 34.1,27-28; Dt.5.22).

29.1-30: The investiture of Solomon and the death of David. **1:** The word *palace* is probably an error for "house," meaning the temple. **2-5:** Compare 22.14-16. **6-9:** The call for a freewill offering again follows the tradition of Moses (see 28.19 n.; compare Ex.25.1-9; 35.4-29). *Darics* were originally coins of Persian origin; compare Ezra 8.27. **10-19:** David's prayer of farewell, a beautiful composition of the Chronicler, reflecting the best theology of his time

honor come from thee, and thou rulest over all. In thy hand are power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.¹³ And now we thank thee, our God, and praise thy glorious name.

14 "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee.¹⁵ For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding.¹

16 O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building thee a house for thy holy name comes from thy hand and is all thy own.¹⁷ I know, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness; in the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen thy people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to thee.¹⁸ O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep for ever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of thy people, and direct their hearts toward thee.¹⁹ Grant to Solomon my son that with a whole heart he may keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision."

20 Then David said to all the assembly, "Bless the LORD your God." And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed their heads, and worshiped the LORD, and did obeisance to the king.²¹ And they performed sacrifices to the LORD, and

on the next day offered burnt offerings to the LORD, a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel;²² and they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great gladness.

And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and they anointed him as prince for the LORD, and Zadok as priest.²³ Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father; and he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him.²⁴ All the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, pledged their allegiance to King Solomon.²⁵ And the LORD gave Solomon great repute in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

26 Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel.²⁷ The time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.²⁸ Then he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his stead.²⁹ Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the Chronicles of Samuel the seer, and in the Chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and in the Chronicles of Gad the seer,³⁰ with accounts of all his rule and his might and of the circumstances that came upon him and upon Israel, and upon all the kingdoms of the countries.

i Gk Vg: Heb *hope*

(probably fourth century B.C.); there is as yet no hint of a blissful after-life (see 1 Kg.8.12-21 n., 22-40 n.). 19: *Palace*, see v. 1 n. 22: The phrase *the second time* is used in reference to 23.1. The scene here is a kind of ratification of what David had already done because God had determined it (v. 1). Note the part played by *Zadok* in 1 Kg. ch. 1. 23: The equivalent of this verse in the earlier account (1 Kg.2.12) comes after the death of David. 27: See 1 Kg.2.11. 28: Compare the adulatory quality of this verse with 1 Kg.2.10. 29-30: On the nature of these sources, see the Introduction. The phrase *the kingdoms of the countries* refers to the surrounding peoples with which David came into contact, such as the Philistines, the Arameans, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Edomites.

CHRONICLES

The general character and problems of 2 Chronicles are discussed in the Introduction to 1 Chronicles, for 1 and 2 Chronicles were originally a single book. Taking up the story of the monarchy where 1 Chronicles leaves off, chs. 1 to 9 of 2 Chronicles present the reign of Solomon from the viewpoint of the Chronicler; his Solomon is an ideal figure, second only to David in importance. The greater part of the book, chs. 10–36, is the Chronicler's account of the period of the Divided Monarchy, Judah and Israel (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," §§ 11–12). He writes as little as possible about the northern kingdom (Israel), since to him it did not represent the true Israel and hence was not really important. His hostility toward the northern kingdom is sometimes attributed to hatred of the Samaritans. The Chronicler was at the same time aware of the grave apostasy of the southern kingdom (Judah). Accepting the Deuteronomic view that national calamity is the result of national sin, he found sufficient reason for the disaster that overtook Judah. He interpreted the past as a warning for his own time and for the future.

SOLOMON THE SON OF DAVID ESTABLISHED himself in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great.

2 Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to all the leaders in all Israel, the heads of fathers' houses. ³ And Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness, was there. ⁴ (But David had brought up the ark of God from Kir'iath-j'e'arim to the place that David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.) ⁵ Moreover the bronze altar that Bez'alel the son of Uri, son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of the LORD. And Solomon and the assembly sought the LORD. ⁶ And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which was at the tent of meeting, and offer-

ed a thousand burnt offerings upon it.

7 In that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you." ⁸ And Solomon said to God, "Thou hast shown great and steadfast love to David my father, and hast made me king in his stead. ⁹ O LORD God, let thy promise to David my father be now fulfilled, for thou hast made me king over a people as many as the dust of the earth. ¹⁰ Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this thy people, that is so great?" ¹¹ God answered Solomon, "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked long life, but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may rule my people over whom I have made you king, ¹² wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. I will also give you riches, possessions, and honor, such as none of the kings had who were before you,

1.1–17: Solomon receives wisdom. 2–6: Our author passes over the machinations and murders of 1 Kg. chs. 1–2, also the marriage alliance with Egypt of 1 Kg.3.1–2, and begins his account of Solomon with a religious act, the visit to the high place at Gibeon. The ark of the covenant is introduced into the story (contrast 1 Kg.3.3–15) to make less objectionable a visit to a high place (compare 1 Kg.3.3; 2 Kg.23.5; 1 Chr.21.29). *Bezazel and the bronze altar*, compare Ex. 27.1–2; 31.1; 1 Chr.2.20. 7–13: This episode, very creditable to Solomon, is here abridged from 1 Kg.3.3–15; the statement that it was a dream has been removed. Also removed is the story of the judgment between the two harlots (1 Kg.3.16–28). 9: *People as many as the dust of the earth*, compare 1 Kg.4.20. 14–17: This section is taken from 1 Kg.10.26–29.

and none after you shall have the like."

¹³ So Solomon came from^a the high place at Gibeon, from before the tent of meeting, to Jerusalem. And he reigned over Israel.

¹⁴ Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shepher-lah. ¹⁶ And Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Ku'e, and the king's traders received them from Ku'e for a price. ¹⁷ They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; likewise through them these were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

^{2b} Now Solomon purposed to build a temple for the name of the LORD, and a royal palace for himself. ^{2c} And Solomon assigned seventy thousand men to bear burdens and eighty thousand to quarry in the hill country, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them. ³ And Solomon sent word to Hiram the king of Tyre: "As you dealt with David my father and sent him cedar to build himself a house to dwell in, so deal with me. ⁴ Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of the LORD my God and dedicate it to him for the burning of incense of sweet spices before him, and for the continual offering of the showbread, and for burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths and the new moons and the appointed feasts of the LORD our God, as ordained for ever for Israel. ⁵ The house which I am to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. ⁶ But who is able to build him a house, since heaven,

even highest heaven, cannot contain him? Who am I to build a house for him, except as a place to burn incense before him? ⁷ So now send me a man skilled to work in gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and in purple, crimson, and blue fabrics, trained also in engraving, to be with the skilled workers who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. ⁸ Send me also cedar, cypress, and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut timber in Lebanon. And my servants will be with your servants, ⁹ to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the house I am to build will be great and wonderful. ¹⁰ I will give for your servants, the hewers who cut timber, twenty thousand cors of crushed wheat, twenty thousand cors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil."

¹¹ Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in a letter which he sent to Solomon, "Because the LORD loves his people he has made you king over them." ¹² Hiram also said, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endued with discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD, and a royal palace for himself.

¹³ "Now I have sent a skilled man, endued with understanding, Hiram-abi, ¹⁴ the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre. He is trained to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, and in purple, blue, and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and to do all sorts of engraving and execute any design that may be assigned him, with your craftsmen, the craftsmen of my lord, David your father. ¹⁵ Now therefore the wheat and barley, oil

^a Gk Vg: Heb to

^b Ch 1.18 in Heb

^c Ch 2.1 in Heb

2.1-18: Solomon prepares to build the temple. 1-10: This is a rewritten version of 1 Kg.5.1-6, 11; note *Hiram* instead of *Hiram* as the name of the king of Tyre. 11-12: Expanded from 1 Kg.5.7, where the letter does not appear. 13-16: *Hiram-abi*, see 1 Kg.7.13-14 n. Here his mother is from *Dan*, in 1 Kg.7.14 from the tribe of Naphtali (compare Ex.31.1-5). *Joppa* is not

and wine, of which my lord has spoken, let him send to his servants; ¹⁶ and we will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon, and bring it to you in rafts by sea to Joppa, so that you may take it up to Jerusalem."

17 Then Solomon took a census of all the aliens who were in the land of Israel, after the census of them which David his father had taken; and there were found a hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred. ¹⁸ Seventy thousand of them he assigned to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry in the hill country, and three thousand six hundred as overseers to make the people work.

3 Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Mori'ah, where the LORD had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jeb'usite. ² He began to build in the second month of the fourth year of his reign. ³ These are Solomon's measurements^d for building the house of God: the length, in cubits of the old standard, was sixty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits. ⁴ The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits long, equal to the width of the house;^e and its height was a hundred and twenty cubits. He overlaid it on the inside with pure gold. ⁵ The nave he lined with cypress, and covered it

with fine gold, and made palms and chains on it. ⁶ He adorned the house with settings of precious stones. The gold was gold of Parva'im. ⁷ So he lined the house with gold—its beams, its thresholds, its walls, and its doors; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

8 And he made the most holy place; its length, corresponding to the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and its breadth was twenty cubits; he overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. ⁹ The weight of the nails was one shekel^f to fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

10 In the most holy place he made two cherubim of wood^g and overlaid^h them with gold. ¹¹ The wings of the cherubim together extended twenty cubits: one wing of the one, of five cubits, touched the wall of the house, and its other wing, of five cubits, touched the wing of the other cherub; ¹² and of this cherub, one wing, of five cubits, touched the wall of the house, and the other wing, also of five cubits, was joined to the wing of the first cherub. ¹³ The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits; the cherubimⁱ stood on their feet, facing the nave. ¹⁴ And he made the veil of blue and purple and crimson fabrics

^d Syr: Heb foundations e 1 Kg 6.3: Heb uncertain

^f Compare Gk: Heb lacks one shekel

^g Gk: Heb uncertain

^h Heb they overlaid i Heb they

mentioned in 1 Kg.5.9. 17-18: In the new Israel of the Chronicler (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles) *aliens* must of course perform the forced labor, though the historical arrangement was quite otherwise (compare 1 Kg.5.13-18, especially v. 13; also 1 Kg.9.22; 12.4).

3.1-17: Details of the building. This is a condensed and rewritten version of 1 Kg. ch. 6 and 1 Kg.7.15-22 (see notes there). 1: The name *Moriah* appears only here and in Gen.22.2, where another location is probably to be understood. *Ornan the Jebusite*, in 2 Sam.24.16 "Araunah" (compare 1 Chr.21.15). 3: *Cubits*, see 1 Kg.6.2-6 n. The *cubits of the old standard* were larger, being about twenty inches in length. 4: In 1 Kg.6.2 the height of the main part of the building is given as "thirty cubits"; here the measurement *hundred and twenty cubits*, given as the height of the *vestibule*, is either a textual error or a typical exaggeration of the Chronicler to emphasize the impressiveness of the ideal temple. 6: The location of *Parvaim* is unknown; it may be Arabia (see Ophir, 1 Kg.9.28 n.). 8-9: Compare 1 Kg.6.19-22, where much *gold* is already in evidence; but *six hundred talents* (about 40,000 lbs.) stands here only and fairly staggers the imagination, which is perhaps what the Chronicler intended to do in his zeal to make the ideal temple impressive. 10-14: Abridged from 1 Kg.6.23-28. *Cherubim*, see 1 Sam.4.4 n. The description of the *veil before the most holy place* (the inner room at the rear of the temple, sometimes called the "holy of holies") is drawn from a similar feature of the tabernacle (Ex.26.31). The historical temple of Solomon had doors at this point (1 Kg.6.31). At the time of the Chron-

and fine linen, and worked cherubim on it.

15 In front of the house he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high, with a capital of five cubits on the top of each. ¹⁶ He made chains like a necklace^j and put them on the tops of the pillars; and he made a hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains. ¹⁷ He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the south, the other on the north; that on the south he called Jachin, and that on the north Bo'az.

4 He made an altar of bronze, twenty cubits long, and twenty cubits wide, and ten cubits high. ² Then he made the molten sea; it was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. ³ Under it were figures of gourds,^k for thirty^l cubits, compassing the sea round about; the gourds^k were in two rows, cast with it when it was cast. ⁴ It stood upon twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east; the sea was set upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. ⁵ Its thickness was a handbreadth; and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily; it held over three thousand baths. ⁶ He also made ten lavers in which to wash, and set five on the south side, and five on the north side. In these they were to rinse off what was used for the burnt offering, and the sea was for the priests to wash in.

7 And he made ten golden lampstands as prescribed, and set them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. ⁸ He also made ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. And he made a hundred basins of gold. ⁹ He made the court of the

priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid their doors with bronze; ¹⁰ and he set the sea at the southeast corner of the house.

11 Hiram also made the pots, the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram finished the work that he did for King Solomon on the house of God: ¹² the two pillars, the bowls, and the two capitals on the top of the pillars; and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the pillars; ¹³ and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were upon the pillars. ¹⁴ He made the stands also, and the lavers upon the stands, ¹⁵ and the one sea, and the twelve oxen underneath it. ¹⁶ The pots, the shovels, the forks, and all the equipment for these Hiram-abi made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD. ¹⁷ In the plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zer'edah. ¹⁸ Solomon made all these things in great quantities, so that the weight of the bronze was not ascertained.

19 So Solomon made all the things that were in the house of God: the golden altar, the tables for the bread of the Presence, ²⁰ the lampstands and their lamps of pure gold to burn before the inner sanctuary, as prescribed; ²¹ the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs, of purest gold; ²² the snuffers, basins, dishes for incense, and firepans, of pure gold; and the sockets^m of the temple, for the inner doors to the most holy place and for the doors of the nave of the temple were of gold.

j Cn: Heb in the inner sanctuary

k 1 Kg 7.24: Heb oxen

l Compare verse 2: Heb ten

m 1 Kg 7.50: Heb the door of the house

icler there may have been a veil, as there was in New Testament times (Mt.27.51; Mk.15.38; Lk.23.45). 15-17: Two pillars . . . called Jachin and . . . Boaz, see 1 Kg.7.15-22 n.

4.1-22: The temple equipment. This chapter is taken mainly from 1 Kg.7.23-51, omitting vv. 27-37. 1: The altar of bronze is not mentioned in 1 Kg. ch. 7, but it appears in 1 Kg.8.64 and 2 Kg.16.14. 5-6: On the idea that the sea was for the priests to wash in, see 1 Kg.7.23-26 n. (which has the more correct figure of "two thousand" rather than three thousand baths).

5 Thus all the work that Solomon did for the house of the LORD was finished. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, and stored the silver, the gold, and all the vessels in the treasures of the house of God.

2 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. **3** And all the men of Israel assembled before the king at the feast which is in the seventh month. **4** And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. **5** And they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up. **6** And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. **7** So the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. **8** For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. **9** And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place before the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside; and they are there to this day.

10 There was nothing in the ark except the two tables which Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of Egypt. **11** Now when the priests came out of the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to their divisions; **12** and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with a hundred and twenty priests who were trumpeters; **13** and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD,

"For he is good,

for his steadfast love endures for ever,"

the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, **14** so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

6 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness.

2 I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever."

3 Then the king faced about, and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood.

4 And he said, "Blessed be the LORD,

5.1-14: Bringing the ark of the covenant into the temple. This is drawn mainly from 1 Kg.8.1-11, with the insertion of a section on the priests and the Levitical singers (vv. 11b-13a), in which the Chronicler was particularly interested (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles); compare 1 Chr. chs. 25-26. **4:** *The Levites* are substituted for "the priests" of the source (1 Kg.8.3).

6.1-42: Solomon's address to the people and his prayer of dedication. This whole chapter, with the exception of vv. 13 and 41-42, is taken with little change from 1 Kg.8.12-52 (see the notes there). Verses 4-11 are the address to the people and vv. 12-42 the prayer of dedication. The *bronze platform* of v. 13, added by the Chronicler, provides a proper place for *Solomon* to kneel; the regular place of prayer before the altar was sacred to the priests, according to usage at the time of the Chronicler. Verses 41-42, adapted from Ps.132.8-10, provide a fitting conclusion, showing the idealized Solomon to be a very devout and holy man, yet reminding the reader that *David* is, after all, the more important figure; *do not turn away the face of* means "do not reject"; *thy anointed one* is king Solomon himself.

the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, ⁵ 'Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city in all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there, and I chose no man as prince over my people Israel; ⁶ but I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel.' ⁷ Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁸ But the LORD said to David my father, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart; ⁹ nevertheless you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.' ¹⁰ Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise which he made; for I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹¹ And there I have set the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD which he made with the people of Israel."

¹² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands. ¹³ Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court; and he stood upon it. Then he knelt upon his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; ¹⁴ and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to thy servants who walk before thee with all their heart; ¹⁵ who hast kept with thy servant David my father what thou didst declare to him; yea, thou didst speak with thy mouth, and with thy hand hast fulfilled it this day.

¹⁶ Now therefore, O LORD, God of

Israel, keep with thy servant David my father what thou hast promised him, saying, 'There shall never fail you a man before me to sit upon the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.' ¹⁷ Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let thy word be confirmed, which thou hast spoken to thy servant David.

¹⁸ "But will God dwell indeed with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! ¹⁹ Yet have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O LORD my God, hearkening to the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prays before thee; ²⁰ that thy eyes may be open day and night toward this house, the place where thou hast promised to set thy name, that thou mayest hearken to the prayer which thy servant offers toward this place. ²¹ And hearken thou to the supplications of thy servant and of thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; yea, hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place; and when thou hearest, forgive.

²² "If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath, and comes and swears his oath before thy altar in this house, ²³ then hear thou from heaven, and act, and judge thy servants, requiting the guilty by bringing his conduct upon his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

²⁴ "If thy people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against thee, when they turn again and acknowledge thy name, and pray and make supplication to thee in this house, ²⁵ then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again to the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

²⁶ "When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against thee, if they pray toward this place, and acknowledge thy name,

and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them, ²⁷ then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, thy people Israel, when thou dost teach them the good way^a in which they should walk; and grant rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people as an inheritance.

²⁸ "If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar; if their enemies besiege them in any of their cities; whatever plague, whatever sickness there^b is; ²⁹ whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by any man or by all thy people Israel, each knowing his own affliction, and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house; ³⁰ then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render to each whose heart thou knowest, according to all his ways (for thou, thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of men); ³¹ that they may fear thee and walk in thy ways all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest to our fathers.

³² "Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of thy people Israel, comes from a far country for the sake of thy great name, and thy mighty hand, and thy outstretched arm, when he comes and prays toward this house, ³³ hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to thee; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

³⁴ "If thy people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way thou shalt send them, and they pray to thee toward this city which thou hast chosen and the house which I have built for thy name, ³⁵ then hear thou from heaven their prayer and their

supplication, and maintain their cause.

³⁶ "If they sin against thee—for there is no man who does not sin—and thou art angry with them, and dost give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near; ³⁷ yet if they lay it to heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to thee in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, and have acted perversely and wickedly'; ³⁸ if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their captivity, to which they were carried captive, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest to their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name, ³⁹ then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause and forgive thy people who have sinned against thee. ⁴⁰ Now, O my God, let thy eyes be open and thy ears attentive to a prayer of this place.

⁴¹ "And now arise, O LORD God, and go to thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy might. Let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in thy goodness.

⁴² O LORD God, do not turn away the face of thy anointed one! Remember thy steadfast love for David thy servant."

7 When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. ² And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. ³ When all the children of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD

^a Gk Syr Vg: Heb toward the good way

7.1-22: The consecration of the sanctuary and the divine admonition. 1: Fire . . . from heaven (not in 1 Kg.8.54), see 1 Chr. 21.26 n. and compare Lev.9.24. 2: The glory of the LORD, compare 5.14 and see 1 Kg.8.11. 3: The Chronicler added the obeisance of the people. For the liturgical

upon the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the earth on the pavement, and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying,

"For he is good,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever."

4 Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the LORD.

⁵ King Solomon offered as a sacrifice twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. ⁶ The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the LORD which King David had made for giving thanks to the LORD—for his steadfast love endures for ever—whenever David offered praises by their ministry; opposite them the priests sounded trumpets; and all Israel stood.

7 And Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD; for there he offered the burnt offering and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar Solomon had made could not hold the burnt offering and the cereal offering and the fat.

8 At that time Solomon held the feast for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt. ⁹ And on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly; for they had kept the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast seven days. ¹⁰ On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their homes, joyful and glad of heart for the goodness that the LORD had shown to David and to Solomon and to Israel his people.

11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house; all

that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the LORD and in his own house he successfully accomplished. ¹² Then the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.

¹³ When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, ¹⁴ if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. ¹⁵ Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. ¹⁶ For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

¹⁷ And as for you, if you walk before me, as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, ¹⁸ then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'There shall not fail you a man to rule Israel.'

19 "But if you^o turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, ²⁰ then I will pluck you^p up from the land which I have given you;^p and this house, which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ²¹ And at this house, which is exalted, every one passing by will be astonished, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this

^o The word *you* is plural here ^p Heb *them*

words, see 5.13; Ps.136.1. 4-5: Compare 1 Kg.8.62-63, the source. 6: Compare 5.11-13, also 1 Chr. ch. 25; the Levitical musicians did not exist in Solomon's day. 7-8: Compare 1 Kg.8.64-65, the source. 9-10: The source, 1 Kg.8.66, has been drastically changed. The people are not sent away *on the eighth day*, but are kept on for another occasion, *a solemn assembly*, until *the twenty-third day* (compare Lev.23.36; Num.29.35-38; Neh.8.18). 11-22: This section, the divine admonition, is taken from 1 Kg.9.1-9, with little change except that vv. 13-15 were inserted to give a slightly more hopeful tone (compare 6.26-27,37-39).

house?" ²² Then they will say, 'Because they forsook the LORD the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore he has brought all this evil upon them.' "

8 At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house, ² Solomon rebuilt the cities which Hiram had given to him, and settled the people of Israel in them.

3 And Solomon went to Ha'math-zo'bah, and took it. ⁴ He built Tadmor in the wilderness and all the store-cities which he built in Hamath. ⁵ He also built Upper Beth-hor'on and Lower Beth-hor'on, fortified cities with walls, gates, and bars, ⁶ and Ba'alath, and all the store-cities that Solomon had, and all the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. ⁷ All the people who were left of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, who were not of Israel, ⁸ from their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel had not destroyed—these Solomon made a forced levy and so they are to this day. ⁹ But of the people of Israel Solomon made no slaves for his work; they were soldiers, and his officers, the commanders of his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁰ And these were the chief officers of King Solomon, two hundred and fifty, who

exercised authority over the people.

11 Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the city of David to the house which he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not live in the house of David king of Israel, for the places to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy."

12 Then Solomon offered up burnt offerings to the LORD upon the altar of the LORD which he had built before the vestibule, ¹³ as the duty of each day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses for the sabbaths, the new moons, and the three annual feasts—the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. ¹⁴ According to the ordinance of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, and the Levites for their offices of praise and ministry before the priests as the duty of each day required, and the gatekeepers in their divisions for the several gates; for so David the man of God had commanded. ¹⁵ And they did not turn aside from what the king had commanded the priests and Levites concerning any matter and concerning the treasures.

16 Thus was accomplished all the work of Solomon from^a the day the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.

17 Then Solomon went to E'zion-ge'ber and Eloth on the shore of the sea, in the land of Edom. ¹⁸ And Hiram

^a Gk Syr Vg: Heb to

8.1-18: Various activities of Solomon. This chapter is based on 1 Kg.9.10-28. **2:** In 1 Kg. 9.10-14 *Solomon ceded the cities to Hiram* (here called *Huram*) to raise needed money; but here the cities go to Solomon. **3:** This campaign is otherwise unknown; it is perhaps an adaptation of 1 Chr.18.3. **4:** *Tadmor* is Palmyra, the great city of the Syrian desert, which could hardly be intended here; 1 Kg.9.18 reads "Tamar," a small place in southern Judah (Ezek.47.19; 48.28). **7-10:** These verses follow 1 Kg.9.20-23 closely, except that in v. 10 a smaller number is given; usually the numbers of the Chronicler are larger (see 1 Chr.27.1 n.). **11:** Compare 1 Kg.3.1; 7.8; 9.24. The reason given for moving the residence of the woman is an addition by the Chronicler (compare Ezek.44.9). **12-15:** These verses are an expansion of 1 Kg.9.25 to bring these acts of Solomon in line with the ideas of the Chronicler. In v. 12 it is made clear that Solomon remained outside the sanctuary *before the vestibule*; only the priests could go inside (see 1 Kg.9.25 n.). **16:** Added by the Chronicler. **17-18:** Taken with a few changes from 1 Kg. 9.26-28 (see notes there.)

sent him by his servants ships and servants familiar with the sea, and they went to Ophir together with the servants of Solomon, and fetched from there four hundred and fifty talents of gold and brought it to King Solomon.

9 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions, having a very great retinue and camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. ² And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from Solomon which he could not explain to her. ³ And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, ⁴ the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, and their clothing, his cupbearers, and their clothing, and his burnt offerings which he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

5 And she said to the king, "The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, ⁶ but I did not believe their reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and behold, half the greatness of your wisdom was not told me; you surpass the report which I heard. ⁷ Happy are your wives!" Happy are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁸ Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the LORD your God! Because your God loved Israel and would establish them for ever, he has made you king over them, that you may execute justice and righteousness." ⁹ Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones: there were no spices such as those which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

10 Moreover the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, who brought gold from Ophir, brought al-gum wood and precious stones. ¹¹ And the king made of the al-gum wood steps^r for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, lyres also and harps for the singers; there never was seen the like of them before in the land of Judah.

12 And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what she had brought to the king. So she turned and went back to her own land, with her servants.

13 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, ¹⁴ besides that which the traders and merchants brought; and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon. ¹⁵ King Solomon made two hundred large shields of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of beaten gold went into each shield. ¹⁶ And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of gold went into each shield; and the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. ¹⁷ The king also made a great ivory throne, and overlaid it with pure gold. ¹⁸ The throne had six steps and a footstool of gold, which were attached to the throne, and on each side of the seat were arm rests and two lions standing beside the arm rests, ¹⁹ while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom. ²⁰ All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. ²¹ For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram;

^r Heb *their*

^s Gk Compare 1 Kg. 10.8: Heb *men*

^t Gk Vg: The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

once every three years the ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.^x

22 Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. ²³ And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. ²⁴ Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and of gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year. ²⁵ And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. ²⁶ And he ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. ²⁷ And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephe'lah. ²⁸ And horses were imported for Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

29 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, from first to last, are they not written in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahi'jah the Shi'lonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jerobo'am the son of Nebat? ³⁰ Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. ³¹ And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father; and Rehobo'am his son reigned in his stead.

10 Rehobo'am went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. ² And when Jerobo'am the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was in Egypt, whither he had fled from King Solomon), then Jerobo'am returned from Egypt. ³ And they sent and called him; and Jerobo'am and all Israel came and said to Rehobo'am, ⁴ "Your father made

our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke upon us, and we will serve you." ⁵ He said to them, "Come to me again in three days." So the people went away.

6 Then King Rehobo'am took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?" ⁷ And they said to him, "If you will be kind to this people and please them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants for ever." ⁸ But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. ⁹ And he said to them, "What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put upon us'?" ¹⁰ And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you speak to the people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but do you lighten it for us'; thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. ¹¹ And now, whereas my father laid upon you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.'"

12 So Jerobo'am and all the people came to Rehobo'am the third day, as the king said, "Come to me again the third day." ¹³ And the king answered them harshly, and forsaking the counsel of the old men, ¹⁴ King Rehobo'am spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." ¹⁵ So the

^x Or baboons

with a few changes. With vv. 25-28, compare 1.14-17; 1 Kg.4.21,26. 29-31: Taken with changes from 1 Kg.11.41-43, omitting all unfavorable aspects of Solomon's reign presented in 1 Kg. 11.1-40 (see notes there). On the books mentioned in v. 29, see Introduction to 1 Chronicles.

10.1-19: The division of the kingdom. This chapter reproduces almost exactly 1 Kg.12.1-19, in spite of the fact that the account reflects little credit on *Rehoboam*; 1 Kg.12.20, which reveals the weakness of Judah, is omitted.

king did not hearken to the people; for it was a turn of affairs brought about by God that the LORD might fulfil his word, which he spoke by Ahi'jah the Shi'lonite to Jerobo'am the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king did not hearken to them, the people answered the king,

"What portion have we in David?

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

Each of you to your tents, O Israel!

Look now to your own house, David."

So all Israel departed to their tents.

17 But Rehobo'am reigned over the people of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. 18 Then King Rehobo'am sent Hador'am, who was taskmaster over the forced labor, and the people of Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehobo'am made haste to mount his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. 19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

|| When Rehobo'am came to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah, and Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors, to fight against Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehobo'am. 2 But the word of the LORD came to Shemai'ah the man of God: 3 "Say to Rehobo'am the son of Solomon king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, 4 'Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your brethren. Return every man to his home, for this thing

is from me.' " So they hearkened to the word of the LORD, and returned and did not go against Jerobo'am.

5 Rehobo'am dwelt in Jerusalem, and he built cities for defense in Judah. 6 He built Bethlehem, Etam, Teko'a, 7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mare'shah, Ziph, 9 Adora'im, Lachish, Aze'kah, 10 Zorah, Ai'jalon, and Hebron, fortified cities which are in Judah and in Benjamin. 11 He made the fortresses strong, and put commanders in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12 And he put shields and spears in all the cities, and made them very strong. So he held Judah and Benjamin.

13 And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him from all places where they lived. 14 For the Levites left their common lands and their holdings and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jerobo'am and his sons cast them out from serving as priests of the LORD, 15 and he appointed his own priests for the high places, and for the satyrs, and for the calves which he had made. 16 And those who had set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came after them from all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD, the God of their fathers. 17 They strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they made Rehobo'am the son of Solomon secure, for they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon.

18 Rehobo'am took as wife Ma'halath the daughter of Jer'imoth the

11.1-23: The beginning of the reign of Rehoboam. 1-4: These verses follow closely 1 Kg.12.21-24, in spite of a tendency in favor of the northern kingdom. The phrase *all Israel in Judah and Benjamin*, lacking in 1 Kg.12.23, is intended to make clear that the southern kingdom was the true Israel. In the older sources, "all Israel" means the northern tribes only (compare 2 Sam. 2.9; 1 Kg.12.18,20). After the fall of the northern kingdom, this name was gradually assumed by Judah. 5-12: These verses, which have no parallel in 1 Kings, are added for the purpose of showing the strength of Judah; they are probably based on a good source. 10,12: *Benjamin*, see 1 Kg.12.21-24 n. 13-17: These verses, also without parallel in 1 Kings, are designed to show that the northern kingdom (*all Israel*, v. 13; see vv. 1-4 n.) was faithless to the LORD; hence the priests and Levites flocked to the south. Other good people also came, and things went well for three years. 18-23: In 1 Kg. ch. 11, Solomon is reproached for having a multitude of *wives and concubines*. The Chronicler omits this section of his source. Here, in an account from an otherwise unknown source, he transfers some of the onus to *Rehoboam*.

son of David, and of Ab'ihail the daughter of Eli'ab the son of Jesse; ¹⁹ and she bore him sons, Je'ush, Shemari'ah, and Zaham. ²⁰ After her he took Ma'acah the daughter of Ab'salom, who bore him Abi'jah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelo'mith. ²¹ Rehobo'am loved Ma'acah the daughter of Ab'salom above all his wives and concubines (he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and had twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters); ²² and Rehobo'am appointed Abi'jah the son of Ma'acah as chief prince among his brothers, for he intended to make him king. ²³ And he dealt wisely, and distributed some of his sons through all the districts of Judah and Benjamin, in all the fortified cities; and he gave them abundant provisions, and procured wives for them."

12 When the rule of Rehobo'am was established and was strong, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him. ² In the fifth year of King Rehobo'am, because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem ³ with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen. And the people were without number who came with him from Egypt-Libyans, Suk'ki-im, and Ethiopians. ⁴ And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. ⁵ Then Shemai'ah the prophet came to Rehobo'am and to the princes of Judah, who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the LORD, 'You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak.'" ⁶ Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The LORD is righteous." ⁷ When the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemai'ah: "They have humbled themselves; I will not destroy them, but

I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. ⁸ Nevertheless they shall be servants to him, that they may know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

⁹ So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away the shields of gold which Solomon had made; ¹⁰ and King Rehobo'am made in their stead shields of bronze, and committed them to the hands of the officers of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. ¹¹ And as often as the king went into the house of the LORD, the guard came and bore them, and brought them back to the guardroom. ¹² And when he humbled himself the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to make a complete destruction; moreover, conditions were good in Judah.

¹³ So King Rehobo'am established himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Rehobo'am was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put his name there. His mother's name was Na'amah the Ammonitess. ¹⁴ And he did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek the LORD.

¹⁵ Now the acts of Rehobo'am, from first to last, are they not written in the chronicles of Shemai'ah the prophet and of Iddo the seer? There were continual wars between Rehobo'am and Jerobo'am. ¹⁶ And Rehobo'am slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David; and Abi'jah his son reigned in his stead.

u Cn: Heb sought a multitude of wives
v Heb seer, to enroll oneself

12.1-16: Rehoboam's sin; his punishment and death. The source is 1 Kg.14.21-31, with expansions to show that Shishak's invasion was the direct result of the apostasy of Rehoboam and all Israel (meaning Judah; compare v. 6 and see 11.1-4 n.). Complete destruction was averted by repentance (vv. 7,12). See 1 Kg.14.21-31 n.

13 In the eighteenth year of King Jerobo'am Abi'jah began to reign over Judah. ² He reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Micai'ah the daughter of U'riel of Gib'e-ah.

Now there was war between Abi'jah and Jerobo'am. ³ Abi'jah went out to battle having an army of valiant men of war, four hundred thousand picked men; and Jerobo'am drew up his line of battle against him with eight hundred thousand picked mighty warriors.

⁴ Then Abi'jah stood up on Mount Zemara'im which is in the hill country of E'phraim, and said, "Hear me, O Jerobo'am and all Israel!

⁵ Ought you not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel for ever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt? ⁶ Yet Jerobo'am the son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord; ⁷ and certain worthless scoundrels gathered about him and defied Rehobo'am the son of Solomon, when Rehobo'am was young and irresolute and could not withstand them.

⁸ "And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David, because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves which Jerobo'am made you for gods. ⁹ Have you not driven out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made priests for yourselves like the peoples of other lands? Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull or seven rams becomes a priest of what are no gods. ¹⁰ But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him. We have priests ministering to the LORD who are sons of Aaron, and Levites for their service.

¹¹ They offer to the LORD every

morning and every evening burnt offerings and incense of sweet spices, set out the showbread on the table of pure gold, and care for the golden lampstand that its lamps may burn every evening; for we keep the charge of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken him. ¹² Behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with their battle trumpets to sound the call to battle against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers; for you cannot succeed."

¹³ Jerobo'am had sent an ambush around to come on them from behind; thus his troops^w were in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them. ¹⁴ And when Judah looked, behold, the battle was before and behind them; and they cried to the LORD, and the priests blew the trumpets. ¹⁵ Then the men of Judah raised the battle shout. And when the men of Judah shouted, God defeated Jerobo'am and all Israel before Abi'jah and Judah. ¹⁶ The men of Israel fled before Judah, and God gave them into their hand. ¹⁷ Abi'jah and his people slew them with a great slaughter; so there fell slain of Israel five hundred thousand picked men. ¹⁸ Thus the men of Israel were subdued at that time, and the men of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD, the God of their fathers. ¹⁹ And Abi'jah pursued Jerobo'am, and took cities from him, Bethel with its villages and Jesha'nah with its villages and Ephron^x with its villages. ²⁰ Jerobo'am did not recover his power in the days of Abi'jah; and the LORD smote him, and he died. ²¹ But Abi'jah grew mighty. And he took fourteen wives, and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. ²² The rest of the acts of Abi'jah, his ways

^w Heb they

^x Another reading is Ephraim

13.1-22: The reign of Abijah; his great victory over the north. Verses 1-2 parallel 1 Kg.15.1-2, with slight differences in names; v. 22 may be compared with 1 Kg.15.7a. Except for these parallels, the chapter is apparently a free composition of the Chronicler, developed from 1 Kg.15.7b. The theme is not really a war between north and south, or Israel and Judah (note the exaggerated numbers); rather it is the perpetual conflict between apostasy and true worship in all times.

and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.

14^y So Abi'jah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land had rest for ten years.^{2z} And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God.³ He took away the foreign altars and the high places, and broke down the pillars and hewed down the Ashe'rim,⁴ and commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment.⁵ He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars. And the kingdom had rest under him.⁶ He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest. He had no war in those years, for the LORD gave him peace.⁷ And he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities, and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars; the land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought him, and he has given us peace on every side." So they built and prospered.⁸ And Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah, armed with bucklers and spears, and two hundred and eighty thousand men from Benjamin, that carried shields and drew bows; all these were mighty men of valor.

9 Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and came as far as Mare'shah.¹⁰ And Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up their lines of battle in the valley of Zeph'athah at Mare'shah.

¹¹ And Asa cried to the LORD his God,

"O LORD, there is none like thee to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on thee, and in thy name we have come against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee."¹² So the LORD defeated the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.¹³ Asa and the people that were with him pursued them as far as Gerar, and the Ethiopians fell until none remained alive; for they were broken before the LORD and his army. The men of Judah^a carried away very much booty.¹⁴ And they smote all the cities round about Gerar, for the fear of the LORD was upon them. They plundered all the cities, for there was much plunder in them.¹⁵ And they smote the tents of those who had cattle,^b and carried away sheep in abundance and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

15 The Spirit of God came upon Azari'ah the son of Oded,² and he went out to meet Asa, and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The LORD is with you, while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you."³ For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law;⁴ but when in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them.⁵ In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great

^y Ch 13.23 in Heb ^z Ch 14.1 in Heb
^a Heb they ^b Heb obscure

14.1-15: The beginning of the reign of Asa, and his great victory over the Ethiopians. In 1 Kings only a relatively brief passage (1 Kg.15.9-24) deals with Asa; here the story is expanded to three chapters (chs. 14; 15; 16). Asa is presented by the Chronicler as a man like David, great on the field of battle and diligent in religious reform. In the end, his religious loyalty flagged, and he had to be suitably punished. **1-5:** Roughly parallel to 1 Kg.15.8-14. **6-8:** Added by the Chronicler from another source (compare 1 Kg.15.23; Jer.41.9). **9-15:** This is another legendary battle, like that of ch. 13, to show the power of the LORD. There is no hint of it elsewhere in the Bible. *The Ethiopian* may mean "the Egyptian" (see 2 Kg.19.9 n.) or "the Arabian," but no king named *Zerah* is otherwise known.

15.1-19: Asa's reform. **1-5:** In this passage, which has no parallel, Asa is pictured as a great reformer, like Hezekiah and Josiah at a later date. The prophet *Azariah the son of Oded* is not

disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. ⁶ They were broken in pieces, nation against nation and city against city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress. ⁷ But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."

8 When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azari'ah the son of Oded,^c he took courage, and put away the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the hill country of E'phraim, and he repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the LORD.^d ⁹ And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from E'phraim, Manas'seh, and Simeon who were sojourning with them, for great numbers had deserted to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. ¹⁰ They were gathered at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. ¹¹ They sacrificed to the LORD on that day, from the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. ¹² And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul; ¹³ and that whoever would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman. ¹⁴ They took oath to the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with horns. ¹⁵ And all Judah rejoiced over the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and had sought him with their whole desire, and he was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest round about.

16 Even Ma'acah, his mother, King Asa removed from being queen mother because she had made an abominable

image for Ashe'rah. Asa cut down her image, crushed it, and burned it at the brook Kidron. ¹⁷ But the high places were not taken out of Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was blameless all his days. ¹⁸ And he brought into the house of God the votive gifts of his father and his own votive gifts, silver, and gold, and vessels. ¹⁹ And there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.

16 In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Ba'asha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. ² Then Asa took silver and gold from the treasures of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and sent them to Ben-ha'dad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, ³ "Let there be a league between me and you, as between my father and your father; behold, I am sending to you silver and gold; go, break your league with Ba'asha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me." ⁴ And Ben-ha'dad hearkened to King Asa, and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered I'jon, Dan, A'bel-ma'im, and all the store-cities of Naph'tali. ⁵ And when Ba'asha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah, and let his work cease. ⁶ Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Ba'asha had been building, and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

7 At that time Hana'ni the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him, "Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you. ⁸ Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge

^c Compare Syr Vg: Heb the prophecy, Oded the prophet
^d Heb the vestibule of the LORD

mentioned elsewhere. 16-19: For a parallel, see 1 Kg.15.13-15, which suggested Asa as a reformer. 16: *Asherah*, see 1 Kg.14.15 n.

16.1-14: The war with Baasha; Asa's apostasy, punishment, and death. 1-6: Except for the date, these verses follow closely 1 Kg.15.17-22. 7-10: This rebuke by the prophet and the unrepentant attitude of Asa were introduced here by the Chronicler to explain the later illness

army with exceedingly many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the LORD, he gave them into your hand. ⁹ For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show his might in behalf of those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this; for from now on you will have wars.”

¹⁰ Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in the stocks, in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time.

¹¹ The acts of Asa, from first to last, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ¹² In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe; yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but sought help from physicians. ¹³ And Asa slept with his fathers, dying in the forty-first year of his reign. ¹⁴ They buried him in the tomb which he had hewn out for himself in the city of David. They laid him on a bier which had been filled with various kinds of spices prepared by the perfumer's art; and they made a very great fire in his honor.

17 Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel. ² He placed forces in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of E'phraim which Asa his father had taken. ³ The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father;^e he did not seek the

Ba'als, ⁴ but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the ways of Israel. ⁵ Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat; and he had great riches and honor. ⁶ His heart was courageous in the ways of the LORD; and furthermore he took the high places and the Ashe'rim out of Judah.

⁷ In the third year of his reign he sent his princes, Ben-hail, Obadi'ah, Zechari'ah, Nathan'el, and Mica'i'ah, to teach in the cities of Judah; ⁸ and with them the Levites, Shemai'ah, Nethani'ah, Zebadi'ah, As'ahel, Shemi'ramoth, Jehon'athan, Adoni'jah, Tobi'jah, and Tobadoni'jah; and with these Levites, the priests Eli'shama and Jeho'ram. ⁹ And they taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the LORD with them; they went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.

¹⁰ And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

¹¹ Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and silver for tribute; and the Arabs also brought him seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred he-goats. ¹² And Jehoshaphat grew steadily greater. He built in Judah fortresses and store-cities, ¹³ and he had great stores in the cities of Judah. He had soldiers, mighty men of valor,

^e Another reading is *his father David*

of the king (v. 12). **11-14:** 1 Kg.15.23-24a has been expanded by emphasis on the culpability of Asa and the grandeur of his funeral, in spite of his sin.

17.1-19: The initially good and prosperous reign of Jehoshaphat. Chapters 17-20 are taken up with the reign of this king, exhibiting, as also in the case of Asa (see 14.1-14 n.), a considerable expansion of the source material (found in 1 Kg.15.24b; 22.1-35a,41-49). Jehoshaphat is represented as a ruler who did mostly good things, for which he was rewarded, but also some bad things, for which he was punished. **1-6:** With the exception of v. 1a (1 Kg.15.24b), this comes largely from sources now lost or is the author's creation. **6:** This contradicts 20.33 and 1 Kg. 22.43. *The Asherim*, see 1 Kg.14.15 n. **7-9:** No parallel. Here the Chronicler has the king send out a delegation of five princes, nine Levites, and two priests for religious education *among the people*. The preponderance of Levites is significant for the Chronicler's ideology. *The book of the law*, compare 2 Kg.22.8-13; Dt.17.18-20. **10-19:** Without parallel. The king was not only a man of religion, but also a man of military might. Since he is represented as having an

in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ This was the muster of them by fathers' houses: Of Judah, the commanders of thousands: Adnah the commander, with three hundred thousand mighty men of valor, ¹⁵ and next to him Jehoha'nan the commander, with two hundred and eighty thousand, ¹⁶ and next to him Amasi'ah the son of Zichri, a volunteer for the service of the LORD, with two hundred thousand mighty men of valor. ¹⁷ Of Benjamin: Eli'ada, a mighty man of valor, with two hundred thousand men armed with bow and shield, ¹⁸ and next to him Jeho'zabad with a hundred and eighty thousand armed for war. ¹⁹ These were in the service of the king, besides those whom the king had placed in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

18 Now Jehosh'aphat had great riches and honor; and he made a marriage alliance with Ahab. ² After some years he went down to Ahab in Sama'ria. And Ahab killed an abundance of sheep and oxen for him and for the people who were with him, and induced him to go up against Ramoth-gilead. ³ Ahab king of Israel said to Jehosh'aphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" He answered him, "I am as you are, my people as your people. We will be with you in the war."

⁴ And Jehosh'aphat said to the king of Israel, "Inquire first for the word of the LORD." ⁵ Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I forbear?" And they said, "Go up; for God will give it into the hand of the king." ⁶ But Jehosh'aphat said, "Is there not here another prophet of the LORD of whom we may inquire?" ⁷ And the king of Israel said

to Jehosh'aphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Mica'i'ah the son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil." And Jehosh'aphat said, "Let not the king say so." ⁸ Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Bring quickly Mica'i'ah the son of Imlah." ⁹ Now the king of Israel and Jehosh'aphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes; and they were sitting at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Sama'ria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. ¹⁰ And Zedeki'ah the son of Chena'anah made for himself horns of iron, and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" ¹¹ And all the prophets prophesied so, and said, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

¹² And the messenger who went to summon Mica'i'ah said to him, "Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king; let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." ¹³ But Mica'i'ah said, "As the LORD lives, what my God says, that I will speak." ¹⁴ And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, "Mica'i'ah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" And he answered, "Go up and triumph; they will be given into your hand." ¹⁵ But the king said to him, "How many times shall I adjure you that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?" ¹⁶ And he said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd; and the LORD said, 'These have no master; let each return to his home in peace.'" ¹⁷

army of 1,160,000 men, it is understandable that *the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about*. This is hardly the historical Jehoshaphat.

18.1-34: Jehoshaphat's ill-fated alliance with Ahab. With the exception of vv. 1-2, this chapter is taken almost verbatim from 1 Kg.22.1-35a. It constitutes by far the largest body of material from the northern kingdom used by the Chronicler. It was inserted here probably because it reflects upon Ahab and prepares for the rebuke of Jehoshaphat in the next chapter (see 1 Kg. ch. 22 n.). 1: Compare 2 Kg.8.18,25-27. 2: An expansion of 1 Kg.22.2.

¹⁷ And the king of Israel said to Jehosh'aphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" ¹⁸ And Micai'ah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left; ¹⁹ and the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab the king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. ²⁰ Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.' And the LORD said to him, 'By what means?' ²¹ And he said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go forth and do so.' ²² Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these your prophets; the LORD has spoken evil concerning you."

²³ Then Zedeki'ah the son of Chena'anah came near and struck Micai'ah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the Spirit of the LORD go from me to speak to you?" ²⁴ And Micai'ah said, "Behold, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide yourself." ²⁵ And the king of Israel said, "Seize Micai'ah, and take him back to Amon the governor of the city and to Jo'ash the king's son; ²⁶ and say, 'Thus says the king, Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with scant fare of bread and water, until I return in peace.'" ²⁷ And Micai'ah said, "If you return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Hear, all you peoples!"

²⁸ So the king of Israel and Jehosh'aphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. ²⁹ And the king of Israel said to Jehosh'aphat, "I will

disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your robes." And the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went into battle. ³⁰ Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of his chariots, "Fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel." ³¹ And when the captains of the chariots saw Jehosh'aphat, they said, "It is the king of Israel." So they turned to fight against him; and Jehosh'aphat cried out, and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him, ³² for when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. ³³ But a certain man drew his bow at a venture, and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate; therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn about, and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded." ³⁴ And the battle grew hot that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening; then at sunset he died.

19 Jehosh'aphat the king of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem. ² But Jehu the son of Hana'ni the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehosh'aphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from the LORD. ³ Nevertheless some good is found in you, for you destroyed the Ashe'rahs out of the land, and have set your heart to seek God."

⁴ Jehosh'aphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people, from Beer-sheba to the hill country of E'phraim, and brought them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers. ⁵ He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the

19.1-11: Jehoshaphat, having been rebuked by a prophet, rules wisely. 1-3: These verses were composed by the Chronicler, who felt it necessary to protest against the entanglement with Ahab. The real *Jehu the son of Hanani* prophesied nearly fifty years earlier (compare 1 Kg.16.1). This may be the same man, or an imaginary person of the same name; compare the "Hanani" of 16.7. *The Asherahs*, see 1 Kg.14.15 n. 4-7: No parallel in 1 Kings. The idea of the appointment of judges by this king may have been suggested to the Chronicler by the name *Jehoshaphat*,

judges, "Consider what you do, for you judge not for man but for the LORD; he is with you in giving judgment. ⁷ Now then, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed what you do, for there is no perversion of justice with the LORD our God, or partiality, or taking bribes."

8 Moreover in Jerusalem Jehosh'aphat appointed certain Levites and priests and heads of families of Israel, to give judgment for the LORD and to decide disputed cases. They had their seat at Jerusalem. ⁹ And he charged them: "Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, in faithfulness, and with your whole heart: ¹⁰ whenever a case comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, concerning bloodshed, law or commandment, statutes or ordinances, then you shall instruct them, that they may not incur guilt before the LORD and wrath may not come upon you and your brethren. Thus you shall do, and you will not incur guilt. ¹¹ And behold, Amari'ah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadi'ah the son of Ish'mael, the governor of the house of Judah, in all the king's matters; and the Levites will serve you as officers. Deal courageously, and may the LORD be with the upright!"

20 After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Me-u'nites,^f came against Jehosh'aphat for battle. ² Some men came and told Jehosh'aphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom,^g from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Haz'azon-ta'mar" (that is, En-ge'di). ³ Then Jehosh'aphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast

throughout all Judah. ⁴ And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5 And Jehosh'aphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,^h and said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? Dost thou not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In thy hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee. ⁷ Didst thou not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and give it for ever to the descendants of Abraham thy friend? ⁸ And they have dwelt in it, and have built thee in it a sanctuary for thy name, saying, ⁹ 'If evil comes upon us, the sword, judgment,^h or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before thee, for thy name is in this house, and cry to thee in our affliction, and thou wilt hear and save.' ¹⁰ And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Se'ir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— ¹¹ behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, wilt thou not execute judgment upon them? For we are powerless against this great multitude that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon thee."

13 Meanwhile all the men of Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. ¹⁴ And the Spirit of the LORD came

^f Compare 26.7: Heb *Ammonites*

^g One Ms: Heb *Aram* (Syria)

^h Or the sword of judgment

which means "the LORD judges." Compare Dt.1.16-17; 16.18. **8:** Here *Israel* means Judah, the true Israel in the eyes of the Chronicler (see 11.1-4 n.). **11:** Note the prominence of the *Levites*, who did not exist as a separate class in the time of the historical *Jehoshaphat* (see 1 Chr. 6.1-5 n.; 13.1-4 n.). Compare the procedure of judges in Dt.17.8-13.

20.1-37: The great victory over enemies of the true faith; Jehoshaphat's final mistake and consequent punishment. The Chronicler, having established the character of Jehoshaphat as a righteous king, attributes to him a victory of faith even greater than those of Abijah (ch. 13) and Asa (ch. 14). The story is often called a parable. There is only a faint parallel in 2 Kg.3.4-27. **5:** The new court was a feature of the temple of the Chronicler's time. **6:** This highly developed

upon Jaha'ziel the son of Zechari'ah, son of Benai'ah, son of Je-i'el, son of Mattani'ah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.¹⁵ And he said, "Hearken, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Jehosh'aphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Fear not, and be not dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's.'¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them; behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz; you will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeru'el.¹⁷ You will not need to fight in this battle; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Fear not, and be not dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."

¹⁸ Then Jehosh'aphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.¹⁹ And the Levites, of the Ko'hathites and the Kor'ahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

²⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Teko'a; and as they went out, Jehosh'aphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."²¹ And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy array, as they went before the army, and say,

"Give thanks to the LORD,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever."

²² And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against

the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Se'ir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.²³ For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Se'ir, destroying them utterly, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Se'ir, they all helped to destroy one another.

²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and behold, they were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped.²⁵ When Jehosh'aphat and his people came to take the spoil from them, they found cattleⁱ in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much.²⁶ On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Bera'cah,^j for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Bera'cah to this day.²⁷ Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehosh'aphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies.²⁸ They came to Jerusalem, with harps and lyres and trumpets, to the house of the LORD.²⁹ And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel.³⁰ So the realm of Jehosh'aphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest round about.

³¹ Thus Jehosh'aphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azu'bah the daughter of Shilhi.³² He walked in the way of Asa his father and did not turn aside from it; he did what was right in the sight of the LORD.³³ The high

i Gk: Heb among them *j* That is Blessing

monotheism was characteristic of the theology of the Chronicler's time (compare 6.14). **14:** A Levite takes the lead in prophecy. **17:** In battles of this kind, God's people do *not need to fight* (compare 13.15; 14.12; Ezek.38.17-23). Jehoshaphat's army of 1,160,000 (see 17.10-19 n.) was unnecessary. **18-23:** The singing of the Levites seems to have been the decisive human factor in this victory (compare Jg.7.22). **24-30:** Compare Ezek. ch. 39. **31-33:** Compare the

places, however, were not taken away; the people had not yet set their hearts upon the God of their fathers.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehosh'aphat, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Jehu the son of Hana'ni, which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

35 After this Jehosh'aphat king of Judah joined with Ahazi'ah king of Israel, who did wickedly. ³⁶ He joined him in building ships to go to Tarshish, and they built the ships in E'zion-ge'ber. ³⁷ Then Elie'zer the son of Doda'ahu of Mare'shah prophesied against Jehosh'aphat, saying, "Because you have joined with Ahazi'ah, the LORD will destroy what you have made." And the ships were wrecked and were not able to go to Tarshish.

21 Jehosh'aphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Jeho'ram his son reigned in his stead. ² He had brothers, the sons of Jehosh'aphat: Azari'ah, Jehi'el, Zechari'ah, Azari'ah, Michael, and Shephati'ah; all these were the sons of Jehosh'aphat king of Judah. ³ Their father gave them great gifts, of silver, gold, and valuable possessions, together with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jeho'ram, because he was the first-born. ⁴ When Jeho'ram had ascended the throne of his father and was established, he slew all his brothers with the sword, and also some of the princes of Israel. ⁵ Jeho'ram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. ⁶ And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done;

for the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. ⁷ Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant which he had made with David, and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons for ever.

8 In his days Edom revolted from the rule of Judah, and set up a king of their own. ⁹ Then Jeho'ram passed over with his commanders and all his chariots, and he rose by night and smote the E'domites who had surrounded him and his chariot commanders. ¹⁰ So Edom revolted from the rule of Judah to this day. At that time Libnah also revolted from his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD, the God of his fathers.

11 Moreover he made high places in the hill country of Judah, and led the inhabitants of Jerusalem into unfaithfulness, and made Judah go astray. ¹² And a letter came to him from Eli'jah the prophet, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehosh'aphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, ¹³ but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem into unfaithfulness, as the house of Ahab led Israel into unfaithfulness, and also you have killed your brothers, of your father's house, who were better than yourself; ¹⁴ behold, the LORD will bring a great plague on your people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions, ¹⁵ and you yourself will have a severe sickness with a dis-

source, 1 Kg.22.41-43. **34**: The parallel is 1 Kg.22.45, with a difference in the name of the book. *Israel* here means Judah (see 11.1-4 n.). **35-37**: The parallel is 1 Kg.22.44,48-49, drastically rewritten to show that the loss of the ships was due to improper association with *Ahaziah*.

21.1-20: *Jehoram's wicked reign and his punishment*. *Jehoram* is already given a bad reputation in 2 Kg.8.18; the Chronicler makes him worse and increases his punishments. **1**: The source is 1 Kg.22.50. **2-4**: These verses, which have no known source, are probably based on historically correct information (compare 11.22-23; Jg.9.1-6). **5-7**: Taken with changes from 2 Kgs.8.17-19. **8-10**: Taken from 2 Kg.8.20-22, with the addition of the last clause giving the Chronicler's explanation why *Jehoram* was having this trouble. **11-15**: The letter . . . from *Elijah the prophet* is a creation of the Chronicler. The question as to whether Elijah was still living at this time is pointless. Though the Chronicler avoided for the most part the use of names and incidents from the northern kingdom, he knew of the reputation of Elijah as a mighty

ease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the disease, day by day.' ”

16 And the LORD stirred up against Jeho'ram the anger of the Philistines and of the Arabs who are near the Ethiopians; ¹⁷ and they came up against Judah, and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions they found that belonged to the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jeho'ahaz, his youngest son.

18 And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. ¹⁹ In course of time, at the end of two years, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great agony. His people made no fire in his honor, like the fires made for his fathers. ²⁰ He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem; and he departed with no one's regret. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

22 And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahazi'ah his youngest son king in his stead; for the band of men that came with the Arabs to the camp had slain all the older sons. So Ahazi'ah the son of Jeho'ram king of Judah reigned. ² Ahazi'ah was forty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athali'ah, the granddaughter of Omri. ³ He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly. ⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done; for after the

death of his father they were his counselors, to his undoing. ⁵ He even followed their counsel, and went with Jeho'ram the son of Ahab king of Israel to make war against Haz'ael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead. And the Syrians wounded Joram, ⁶ and he returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Haz'ael king of Syria. And Ahazi'ah the son of Jeho'ram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

7 But it was ordained by God that the downfall of Ahazi'ah should come about through his going to visit Joram. For when he came there he went out with Jeho'ram to meet Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. ⁸ And when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, he met the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahazi'ah's brothers, who attended Ahazi'ah, and he killed them. ⁹ He searched for Ahazi'ah, and he was captured while hiding in Sama'ria, and he was brought to Jehu and put to death. They buried him, for they said, "He is the grandson of Jehosh'aphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." And the house of Ahazi'ah had no one able to rule the kingdom.

10 Now when Athali'ah the mother of Ahazi'ah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal family of the house of Judah. ¹¹ But Jeho-shab'e-ath, the daughter of the king, took Jo'ash the son of Ahazi'ah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were about to be slain,

man to rebuke kings in the name of the LORD, and used him accordingly to give more point to the rebuke of Jehoram. 16-17: More military punishment; not found in 2 Kings. *Arabs who are near the Ethiopians*, see 14.9-15 n. 18-19: Personal punishment, to fulfill the prophecy in v. 15. Contrast the fine funeral of Asa, 16.14. 20: The same as v. 5, with typical additions (compare 2 Kg.8.24a).

22.1-12: The brief but wicked reign of Ahaziah; his punishment; the usurpation of Athaliah. 1-6: This is a slightly rewritten version of 2 Kg.8.24b-29, with the guilt of Ahaziah heightened. 7: *Forty-two* is an error for "twenty-two"; compare 2 Kg.8.26. 7: A theological interpretation of v. 6 and of 2 Kg.9.21. 8-9: Drawn from 2 Kg.9.27-28, but somewhat rewritten to make the end of Ahaziah less honorable, and to prepare for what follows. 10-12: 2 Kg.11.1-3 with slight changes.

and she put him and his nurse in a bed-chamber. Thus Jehoi'shab'e-ath, the daughter of King Jeho'ram and wife of Jehoi'ada the priest, because she was a sister of Ahazi'ah, hid him from Athali'ah, so that she did not slay him; ¹² and he remained with them six years, hid in the house of God, while Athali'ah reigned over the land.

23 But in the seventh year Jehoi'ada took courage, and entered into a compact with the commanders of hundreds, Azari'ah the son of Jero'-ham, Ish'mael the son of Jehoha'nan, Azari'ah the son of Obed, Ma-asei'ah the son of Adai'ah, and Elisha'phat the son of Zichri. ² And they went about through Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. ³ And all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Jehoi'ada¹ said to them, "Behold, the king's son! Let him reign, as the LORD spoke concerning the sons of David. ⁴ This is the thing that you shall do: of you priests and Levites who come off duty on the sabbath, one third shall be gatekeepers, ⁵ and one third shall be at the king's house and one third at the Gate of the Foundation; and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶ Let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and ministering Levites; they may enter, for they are holy, but all the people shall keep the charge of the LORD. ⁷ The Levites shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; and whoever enters the house shall be slain. Be with the king when he comes in, and when he goes out."

⁸ The Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoi'ada the priest commanded. They each brought his men, who were to go off duty on the

sabbath, with those who were to come on duty on the sabbath; for Jehoi'ada the priest did not dismiss the divisions. ⁹ And Jehoi'ada the priest delivered to the captains the spears and the large and small shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of God; ¹⁰ and he set all the people as a guard for the king, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house. ¹¹ Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they proclaimed him king, and Jehoi'ada and his sons anointed him, and they said, "Long live the king."

¹² When Athali'ah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she went into the house of the LORD to the people; ¹³ and when she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers with their musical instruments leading in the celebration. And Athali'ah rent her clothes, and cried, "Treason! Treason!" ¹⁴ Then Jehoi'ada the priest brought out the captains who were set over the army, saying to them, "Bring her out between the ranks; any one who follows her is to be slain with the sword." For the priest said, "Do not slay her in the house of the LORD." ¹⁵ So they laid hands on her; and she went into the entrance of the horse gate of the king's house, and they slew her there.

¹⁶ And Jehoi'ada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king that they should be the LORD's people. ¹⁷ Then all the people went to the house of Ba'al, and tore it

¹ Heb *he*

23.1-21: The revolt against Athaliah; her punishment by death and the enthronement of Joash. Taken from 2 Kg.11.4-20, with certain characteristic changes and additions with a view to making the revolt the work of the Levites and singers rather than of the military; see vv. 2-3,6, 18-19, added by the Chronicler; in v. 19, even *the gatekeepers* have a share (compare 1 Chr. ch. 26). In v. 13 the insertion of *the singers with their musical instruments leading in the celebration* changes drastically the tense military atmosphere of 2 Kg. ch. 11.

down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces, and they slew Mattan the priest of Ba'al before the altars. ¹⁸ And Jehoi'ada posted watchmen for the house of the LORD under the direction of the Levitical priests and the Levites whom David had organized to be in charge of the house of the LORD, to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David. ¹⁹ He stationed the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD so that no one should enter who was in any way unclean. ²⁰ And he took the captains, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, marching through the upper gate to the king's house. And they set the king upon the royal throne. ²¹ So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, after Athali'ah had been slain with the sword.

24 Jo'ash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Zib'iah of Beersheba. ² And Jo'ash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the days of Jehoi'ada the priest. ³ Jehoi'ada got for him two wives, and he had sons and daughters.

⁴ After this Jo'ash decided to restore the house of the LORD. ⁵ And he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year; and see that you hasten the matter." But the Levites did not hasten it. ⁶ So the king summoned Jehoi'ada the chief, and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and

Jerusalem the tax levied by Moses, the servant of the LORD, on^m the congregation of Israel for the tent of testimony?" ⁷ For the sons of Athali'ah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God; and had also used all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD for the Ba'als.

⁸ So the king commanded, and they made a chest, and set it outside the gate of the house of the LORD. ⁹ And proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in for the LORD the tax that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness. ¹⁰ And all the princes and all the people rejoiced and brought their tax and dropped it into the chest until they had finished. ¹¹ And whenever the chest was brought to the king's officers by the Levites, when they saw that there was much money in it, the king's secretary and the officer of the chief priest would come and empty the chest and take it and return it to its place. Thus they did day after day, and collected money in abundance. ¹² And the king and Jehoi'ada gave it to those who had charge of the work of the house of the LORD, and they hired masons and carpenters to restore the house of the LORD, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the house of the LORD. ¹³ So those who were engaged in the work labored, and the repairing went forward in their hands, and they restored the house of God to its proper condition and strengthened it. ¹⁴ And when they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoi'ada, and with it were made utensils for the house of the LORD, both for the service and for the burnt offerings, and dishes for incense, and vessels of gold and silver. And they

^m Compare Vg: Heb and

24.1-27: The good beginning of Joash; his later apostasy and consequent punishment. Based upon 2 Kg. ch. 12. Joash is depicted by the Chronicler as being considerably worse than he appears to be in 2 Kings, probably because he was a grandson of Athaliah (see 2 Kg. 12.19-21 n.). Such treatment also provides an explanation of Joash's military misfortune and his assassination, both unexplained in 2 Kings. **1-3:** 2 Kg. 12.3 is omitted and v. 3 here is added. **4-7:** Rewritten to give the Levites a greater share, even in the delaying tactics (v. 5). Verse 7 is an added observation, doubtless correct. **8-14:** See 2 Kg. 12.9-16 n. **15-22:** This story, not attested else-

offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoi'ada.

15 But Jehoi'ada grew old and full of days, and died; he was a hundred and thirty years old at his death.¹⁶ And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house.

17 Now after the death of Jehoi'ada the princes of Judah came and did obeisance to the king; then the king hearkened to them.¹⁸ And they forsook the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Ashe'rim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt.¹⁹ Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD; these testified against them, but they would not give heed.

20 Then the Spirit of God took possession ofⁿ Zechari'ah the son of Jehoi'ada the priest; and he stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.'"²¹ But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD.²² Thus Jo'ash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoi'ada, Zechari'ah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. And when he was dying, he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!"

23 At the end of the year the army of the Syrians came up against Jo'ash. They came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus.²⁴ Though the army of the

Syrians had come with few men, the LORD delivered into their hand a very great army, because they had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers. Thus they executed judgment on Jo'ash.

25 When they had departed from him, leaving him severely wounded, his servants conspired against him because of the blood of the son^o of Jehoi'ada the priest, and slew him on his bed. So he died; and they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.²⁶ Those who conspired against him were Zabad the son of Shim'e-ath the Ammonitess, and Jeho'zabad the son of Shimrith the Moabitess.²⁷ Accounts of his sons, and of the many oracles against him, and of the rebuilding^p of the house of God are written in the Commentary on the Book of the Kings. And Amazi'ah his son reigned in his stead.

25 Amazi'ah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jeho-ad'dan of Jerusalem.² And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet not with a blameless heart.³ And as soon as the royal power was firmly in his hand he killed his servants who had slain the king his father.⁴ But he did not put their children to death, according to what is written in the law, in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, or the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin."

5 Then Amazi'ah assembled the men of Judah, and set them by fathers' houses under commanders of thou-

ⁿ Heb clothed itself with
^o Gk Vg: Heb sons ^p Heb founding

where, prepares for what follows. Compare Lk.11.51. **23-24:** A drastically rewritten form of 2 Kg.12.17-18. **25-27:** A reinterpretation of 2 Kg.12.19-21. *The Commentary on the Book of the Kings* can no more be identified than can other such works referred to by the Chronicler (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles).

25.1-28: Amaziah acts wrongfully and suffers punishment. Based upon 2 Kg.14.2-14,17-20. **1-4:** Not essentially different from 2 Kg.14.2-6. **5-13:** An expansion of a single verse, 2 Kg.14.7. Amaziah did wrong in hiring troops from the northern kingdom; even while winning a victory

sands and of hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin. He mustered those twenty years old and upward, and found that they were three hundred thousand picked men, fit for war, able to handle spear and shield. ⁶ He hired also a hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for a hundred talents of silver. ⁷ But a man of God came to him and said, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel, with all these E'phraimites." ⁸ But if you suppose that in this way you will be strong for war, ⁹ God will cast you down before the enemy; for God has power to help or to cast down." ⁹ And Amazi'ah said to the man of God, "But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?" The man of God answered, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this." ¹⁰ Then Amazi'ah discharged the army that had come to him from E'phraim, to go home again. And they became very angry with Judah, and returned home in fierce anger. ¹¹ But Amazi'ah took courage, and led out his people, and went to the Valley of Salt and smote ten thousand men of Se'ir. ¹² The men of Judah captured another ten thousand alive, and took them to the top of a rock and threw them down from the top of the rock; and they were all dashed to pieces. ¹³ But the men of the army whom Amazi'ah sent back, not letting them go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria to Beth-hor'on, and killed three thousand people in them, and took much spoil.

¹⁴ After Amazi'ah came from the slaughter of the E'domites, he brought the gods of the men of Se'ir, and set them up as his gods, and worshiped them, making offerings to them. ¹⁵ Therefore the LORD was angry with Amazi'ah and sent to him a prophet,

who said to him, "Why have you resorted to the gods of a people, which did not deliver their own people from your hand?" ¹⁶ But as he was speaking the king said to him, "Have we made you a royal counselor? Stop! Why should you be put to death?" So the prophet stopped, but said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel."

¹⁷ Then Amazi'ah king of Judah took counsel and sent to Jo'ash the son of Jeho'ahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face." ¹⁸ And Jo'ash the king of Israel sent word to Amazi'ah king of Judah, "A thistle on Lebanon sent to a cedar on Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son for a wife'; and a wild beast of Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thistle." ¹⁹ You say, 'See, I have smitten Edom,' and your heart has lifted you up in boastfulness. But now stay at home; why should you provoke trouble so that you fall, you and Judah with you?"

²⁰ But Amazi'ah would not listen; for it was of God, in order that he might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they had sought the gods of Edom. ²¹ So Jo'ash king of Israel went up; and he and Amazi'ah king of Judah faced one another in battle at Beth-she'mesh, which belongs to Judah. ²² And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his home. ²³ And Jo'ash king of Israel captured Amazi'ah king of Judah, the son of Jo'ash, son of Ahazi'ah, at Beth-she'mesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem for four hundred cubits, from the E'phraim Gate to the Corner Gate. ²⁴ And he seized all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God, and O'bed-

q Gk: Heb But if you go, act, be strong for the battle

over Edom, he was punished for his indiscretion (v. 13). *Samaria* and *Beth-horon* were not among the cities of Judah; there is some confusion here. **14-16:** These verses, not found in 2 Kings, are the Chronicler's way of explaining what follows. **17-19:** See note on the parallel, 2 Kg. 14.8-10. **20-24:** Similar to 2 Kg. 14.11-14, except for the theological explanation in v. 20b.

e'dom with them; he seized also the treasuries of the king's house, and hostages, and he returned to Sama'ria.

25 Amazi'ah the son of Jo'ash king of Judah lived fifteen years after the death of Jo'ash the son of Jeho'ahaz, king of Israel. 26 Now the rest of the deeds of Amazi'ah, from first to last, are they not written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel? 27 From the time when he turned away from the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. 28 And they brought him upon horses; and he was buried with his fathers in the city of David.

26 And all the people of Judah took Uzzi'ah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amazi'ah. 2 He built Eloth and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers. 3 Uzzi'ah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoli'ah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Amazi'ah had done. 5 He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechari'ah, who instructed him in the fear of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

6 He went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities in the territory of Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines. 7 God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabs that dwelt in Gurba'al, and against the Me-u'-

nites. 8 The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzzi'ah, and his fame spread even to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong. 9 Moreover Uzzi'ah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the Angle, and fortified them. 10 And he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for he had large herds, both in the Shephe'lah and in the plain, and he had farmers and vinedressers in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil. 11 Moreover Uzzi'ah had an army of soldiers, fit for war, in divisions according to the numbers in the muster made by Je-i'el the secretary and Ma-asei'ah the officer, under the direction of Hanani'ah, one of the king's commanders. 12 The whole number of the heads of fathers' houses of mighty men of valor was two thousand six hundred. 13 Under their command was an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, who could make war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14 And Uzzi'ah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows, and stones for slinging. 15 In Jerusalem he made engines, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and great stones. And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong.

16 But when he was strong he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was false to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 But Azari'ah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the LORD who were men of valor; 18 and they withstood King Uzzi'ah, and said to him, "It is

25-28: Much the same as 2 Kg.14.17-20, except for the explanatory phrase *From the time when he turned away from the LORD* (v. 27).

26.1-23: Uzziah's good beginning and consequent prosperity; his subsequent sin and consequent punishment. The brief parallel is found in 2 Kg.14.21-22; 15.2-3,5-7. The reign of Uzziah (called also Azariah in 2 Kings) was a long one (v. 3), and the account is greatly expanded here. 1-4: Compare 2 Kg.14.21-22; 15.2-3. 5: Added by the Chronicler. This Zechariah is otherwise unknown; he served the same function as Jehoiada in 24.2. 6-15: Without parallel in 2 Kings, but there is here valuable historical material from an unknown source. 16-20: A free composition of the Chronicler to explain the leprosy of Uzziah and to warn that in the new,

not for you, Uzzi'ah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary; for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God." ¹⁹ Then Uzzi'ah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests leprosy broke out on his forehead, in the presence of the priests in the house of the LORD, by the altar of incense. ²⁰ And Azari'ah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead! And they thrust him out quickly, and he himself hastened to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. ²¹ And King Uzzi'ah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper dwelt in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's household, governing the people of the land.

²² Now the rest of the acts of Uzzi'ah, from first to last, Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz wrote. ²³ And Uzzi'ah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the burial field which belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." And Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

27 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. ² And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD according to all that his father

Uzzi'ah had done—only he did not invade the temple of the LORD. But the people still followed corrupt practices. ³ He built the upper gate of the house of the LORD, and did much building on the wall of Ophel. ⁴ Moreover he built cities in the hill country of Judah, and forts and towers on the wooded hills. ⁵ He fought with the king of the Ammonites and prevailed against them. And the Ammonites gave him that year a hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand cors of wheat and ten thousand of barley. The Ammonites paid him the same amount in the second and the third years. ⁶ So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God. ⁷ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. ⁸ He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. ⁹ And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

28 Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD, like his father David, ² but walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made molten images for the Ba'als; ³ and he burned incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burned his sons as an offering, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of

ideal kingdom the king is not to assume priestly prerogatives. **21–23:** Parallel to 2 Kg.15.5–7, with the change of the name of a book in v. 22.

27.1–9: Jotham's goodness and consequent prosperity. This short chapter parallels 2 Kg.15.33–38, with a few significant changes. Jotham is represented by the Chronicler as a totally good and hence completely prosperous king. Verse 2b was added to show that the king was ritually correct; v. 2c to show that faults came from the people, not the king. Verses 4–6 were added to show the good king's military might. 2 Kg.15.37 was omitted because the Chronicler wished to present the reign of the idealized Jotham as being without any troubles whatever.

28.1–27: The enormous iniquity of Ahaz and the appropriate punishments which he received. Based upon 2 Kg. ch. 16 with drastic rewriting to intensify the unfavorable portrait already present in the source. To the Chronicler, the wholly good reign of Jotham was followed by the wholly bad reign of Ahaz. **1–4:** Not greatly changed from the source, 2 Kg.16.2–4. **5–15:** A

Israel. ⁴ And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

⁵ Therefore the LORD his God gave him into the hand of the king of Syria, who defeated him and took captive a great number of his people and brought them to Damascus. He was also given into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with great slaughter. ⁶ For Pekah the son of Remali'ah slew a hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all of them men of valor, because they had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers. ⁷ And Zichri, a mighty man of E'phraim, slew Ma-asei'ah the king's son and Azri'kam the commander of the palace and Elka'nah the next in authority to the king.

⁸ The men of Israel took captive two hundred thousand of their kinsfolk, women, sons, and daughters; they also took much spoil from them and brought the spoil to Sama'ria. ⁹ But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out to meet the army that came to Sama'ria, and said to them, "Behold, because the LORD, the God of your fathers, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand, but you have slain them in a rage which has reached up to heaven. ¹⁰ And now you intend to subjugate the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, as your slaves. Have you not sins of your own against the LORD your God? ¹¹ Now hear me, and send back the captives from your kinsfolk whom you have taken, for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you." ¹² Certain chiefs also of the men of E'phraim, Azari'ah the son of Joha'nan, Berechi'ah the son of Meshil'lemoth, Jehizki'ah the son of Shallum, and Ama'sa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who were coming from the war, ¹³ and said to them, "You shall not bring the cap-

tives in here, for you propose to bring upon us guilt against the LORD in addition to our present sins and guilt. For our guilt is already great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel." ¹⁴ So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the assembly. ¹⁵ And the men who have been mentioned by name rose and took the captives, and with the spoil they clothed all that were naked among them; they clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them; and carrying all the feeble among them on asses, they brought them to their kinsfolk at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Sama'ria.

¹⁶ At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. ¹⁷ For the E'domites had again invaded and defeated Judah, and carried away captives. ¹⁸ And the Philistines had made raids on the cities in the Shephe'lah and the Negeb of Judah, and had taken Beth-she'mesh, Ai'jalon, Gede'roth, Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they settled there. ¹⁹ For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had dealt wantonly in Judah and had been faithless to the LORD. ²⁰ So Til'gath-pilne'ser king of Assyria came against him, and afflicted him instead of strengthening him. ²¹ For Ahaz took from the house of the LORD and the house of the king and of the princes, and gave tribute to the king of Assyria; but it did not help him.

²² In the time of his distress he became yet more faithless to the LORD—this same King Ahaz. ²³ For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, and said, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they were the ruin

r Gk Syr Vg Compare 2 Kg 16.7: Heb kings

drastic rewriting and expansion of 2 Kg.16.5–6. Both *Syria* and *Israel* defeat *Judah* with tremendous slaughter, signaling God's retributive justice. At the same time, the wicked northern kingdom is not allowed to retain any advantage from its punitive victory (vv. 8–15). **16–25:** Somewhat briefer than the source, 2 Kg.16.7–18. The aim of the writer is to show that Ahaz did

of him, and of all Israel. ²⁴ And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and he shut up the doors of the house of the LORD; and he made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. ²⁵ In every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, provoking to anger the LORD, the God of his fathers. ²⁶ Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁷ And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, for they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. And Hezeki'ah his son reigned in his stead.

29 Hezeki'ah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi'jah the daughter of Zechari'ah. ² And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

3 In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. ⁴ He brought in the priests and the Levites, and assembled them in the square on the east, ⁵ and said to them, "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the holy place. ⁶ For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the LORD our God; they have forsaken him, and have

turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. ⁷ They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel. ⁸ Therefore the wrath of the LORD came on Judah and Jerusalem, and he has made them an object of horror, of astonishment, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. ⁹ For lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. ¹⁰ Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, that his fierce anger may turn away from us. ¹¹ My sons, do not now be negligent, for the LORD has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to him, and to be his ministers and burn incense to him."

12 Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Ama'sai, and Jo'el the son of Azari'ah, of the sons of the Ko'hathites; and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azari'ah the son of Jehal'lelel; and of the Gershonites, Jo'ah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Jo'ah; ¹³ and of the sons of Eli-za'phan, Shimri and Jeu'el; and of the sons of Asaph, Zechari'ah and Mattani'ah; ¹⁴ and of the sons of Heman, Jehu'el and Shim'e-i; and of the sons of Jedu'thun, Shemai'ah and Uz'ziel. ¹⁵ They gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and went in as the king had commanded, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. ¹⁶ The priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to

not profit even temporarily from his unholy alliance with the Assyrians. **26-27:** Rewritten from 2 Kg.16.19-20. Verse 27 contradicts 2 Kg.16.20 with regard to the burial of the king; the evil Ahaz could not be buried in a royal tomb (compare 21.20; 24.25; 26.23).

29.1-36: Hezekiah begins his good reign by cleansing the temple. Second Kings considers Hezekiah an important and on the whole a good king; three chapters (chs. 18-20) are devoted to him. The Chronicler makes him a reformer like the later Josiah, and devotes four chapters to him (chs. 29-32). **1-2:** Taken with little change from 2 Kg.18.2-3. **3-11:** In 28.24 the Chronicler had said that Ahaz closed down the temple entirely (in contrast to 2 Kg.16.10-16). Thus the way was prepared for the present passage, with its theme of reform carried out by *priests and Levites*—a favorite subject with the Chronicler. There is only the slightest affinity with 2 Kg.18.4-6. Verses 6-9 suggest liturgical confession during the Babylonian captivity (compare Zech.1.1-6). **12-19:** Continuation of the reform; no parallel; the Chronicler presents an ideal

cleanse it, and they brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD; and the Levites took it and carried it out to the brook Kidron. ¹⁷ They began to sanctify on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the LORD; then for eight days they sanctified the house of the LORD, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished. ¹⁸ Then they went in to Hezeki'ah the king and said, "We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the table for the showbread and all its utensils. ¹⁹ All the utensils which King Ahaz discarded in his reign when he was faithless, we have made ready and sanctified; and behold, they are before the altar of the LORD."

²⁰ Then Hezeki'ah the king rose early and gathered the officials of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. ²¹ And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven he-goats for a sin offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the LORD. ²² So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and threw it against the altar; and they killed the rams and their blood was thrown against the altar; and they killed the lambs and their blood was thrown against the altar. ²³ Then the he-goats for the sin offering were brought to the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands upon them, ²⁴ and the priests killed them and made a sin offering with their blood on the altar, to make atonement for all Israel. For the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel.

²⁵ And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals,

harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's seer and of Nathan the prophet; for the commandment was from the LORD through his prophets. ²⁶ The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. ²⁷ Then Hezeki'ah commanded that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song to the LORD began also, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸ The whole assembly worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. ²⁹ When the offering was finished, the king and all who were present with him bowed themselves and worshiped. ³⁰ And Hezeki'ah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped.

³¹ Then Hezeki'ah said, "You have now consecrated yourselves to the LORD; come near, bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD." And the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings; and all who were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings. ³² The number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. ³³ And the consecrated offerings were six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. ³⁴ But the priests were too few and could not flay all the burnt offerings, so until other priests had sanctified themselves their brethren the Levites helped them, until the work was finished—for the Levites were more upright in heart than the priests in sanctifying themselves. ³⁵ Besides the great number of burnt offerings there

reform with emphasis on *the Levites*. **20-24:** The ideal sacrifice of rededication. **25-30:** Note the great importance of the Levitical musicians (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles and compare 1 Chr. ch. 25). **31-36:** To the Chronicler, *the Levites were more upright in heart than the priests*.

was the fat of the peace offerings, and there were the libations for the burnt offerings. Thus the service of the house of the LORD was restored. ³⁶ And Hezeki'ah and all the people rejoiced because of what God had done for the people; for the thing came about suddenly.

30 Hezeki'ah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to E'phraim and Manas'sseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover to the LORD the God of Israel. ² For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had taken counsel to keep the passover in the second month— ³ for they could not keep it in its time because the priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number, nor had the people assembled in Jerusalem— ⁴ and the plan seemed right to the king and all the assembly. ⁵ So they decreed to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba to Dan, that the people should come and keep the passover to the LORD the God of Israel, at Jerusalem; for they had not kept it in great numbers as prescribed. ⁶ So couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his princes, as the king had commanded, saying, "O people of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. ⁷ Do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who were faithless to the LORD God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see. ⁸ Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD, and come to his sanctuary, which he has sanctified for ever, and serve the LORD your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. ⁹ For if you

return to the LORD, your brethren and your children will find compassion with their captors, and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him."

¹⁰ So the couriers went from city to city through the country of E'phraim and Manas'sseh, and as far as Zeb'ulun; but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. ¹¹ Only a few men of Asher, of Manas'sseh, and of Zeb'ulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. ¹² The hand of God was also upon Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.

¹³ And many people came together in Jerusalem to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly. ¹⁴ They set to work and removed the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for burning incense they took away and threw into the Kidron valley. ¹⁵ And they killed the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. And the priests and the Levites were put to shame, so that they sanctified themselves, and brought burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. ¹⁶ They took their accustomed posts according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood which they received from the hand of the Levites. ¹⁷ For there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had to kill the passover lamb for every one who was not clean, to make it holy to the LORD. ¹⁸ For a multitude of the people, many of them from E'phraim, Manas'sseh, Is'sachar, and Zeb'ulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the passover otherwise than as prescribed. For Hezeki'ah had prayed for them, saying, "The

30.1-27: Hezekiah's great passover festival. There is no hint of this in 2 Kings. It seems to be a kind of parallel to or preparation for Josiah's great passover in ch. 35. Included is the prophetic hope of the return of the northern tribes to their former loyalty to Jerusalem (compare Ezek.37.15-23). The tolerant laxity of vv. 17-19 is in contrast to the usual attitude of this writer.

good LORD pardon every one ¹⁹ who sets his heart to seek God, the LORD the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary's rules of cleanness." ²⁰ And the LORD heard Hezeki'ah, and healed the people. ²¹ And the people of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with all their might^s to the LORD. ²² And Hezeki'ah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good skill in the service of the LORD. So the people ate the food of the festival for seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD the God of their fathers.

²³ Then the whole assembly agreed together to keep the feast for another seven days; so they kept it for another seven days with gladness. ²⁴ For Hezeki'ah king of Judah gave the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep for offerings, and the princes gave the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep. And the priests sanctified themselves in great numbers. ²⁵ The whole assembly of Judah, and the priests and the Levites, and the whole assembly that came out of Israel, and the sojourners who came out of the land of Israel, and the sojourners who dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. ²⁶ So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. ²⁷ Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came to his holy habitation in heaven.

31 Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke in

pieces the pillars and hewed down the Ashe'rim and broke down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, and in E'phraim and Manas'seh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the people of Israel returned to their cities, every man to his possession.

² And Hezeki'ah appointed the divisions of the priests and of the Levites, division by division, each according to his service, the priests and the Levites, for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to minister in the gates of the camp of the LORD and to give thanks and praise. ³ The contribution of the king from his own possessions was for the burnt offerings: the burnt offerings of morning and evening, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, the new moons, and the appointed feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD. ⁴ And he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to the law of the LORD. ⁵ As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. ⁶ And the people of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of cattle and sheep, and the dedicated things^t which had been consecrated to the LORD their God, and laid them in heaps. ⁷ In the third month they began to pile up the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month. ⁸ When Hezeki'ah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and his people Israel. ⁹ And Hezeki'ah questioned the priests and the Levites

^s Compare 1 Chr 13.8: Heb *with instruments of might*
^t Heb *the tithe of the dedicated things*

31.1-21: Hezekiah's reform and his re-establishment of the priests and Levites. **1:** Similar to 2 Kg.18.4 (see note there), except that here the reforming activity is extended to the territory of the former northern kingdom. Some regard this latter as historically correct, pointing out that the northern kingdom had fallen, and claiming that the Assyrians did not exercise strict control. There is also the possibility that we have here the hope of reunion referred to in ch. 30 (see notes there). **2-10:** As David established *the divisions of the priests and of the Levites*, so Heze-

about the heaps. ¹⁰ Azari'ah the chief priest, who was of the house of Zadok, answered him, "Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of the LORD we have eaten and had enough and have plenty left; for the LORD has blessed his people, so that we have this great store left."

11 Then Hezeki'ah commanded them to prepare chambers in the house of the LORD; and they prepared them. ¹² And they faithfully brought in the contributions, the tithes and the dedicated things. The chief officer in charge of them was Conani'ah the Levite, with Shim'e-i his brother as second; ¹³ while Jehi'el, Azazi'ah, Nahath, As'ahel, Jer'imoth, Jo'zabad, Eli'el, Ismachi'ah, Mahath, and Benai'ah were overseers assisting Conani'ah and Shim'e-i his brother, by the appointment of Hezeki'ah the king and Azari'ah the chief officer of the house of God. ¹⁴ And Ko're the son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the east gate, was over the freewill offerings to God, to apportion the contribution reserved for the LORD and the most holy offerings. ¹⁵ Eden, Mini'amin, Jeshua, Shemai'ah, Amari'ah, and Shecani'ah were faithfully assisting him in the cities of the priests, to distribute the portions to their brethren, old and young alike, by divisions, ¹⁶ except those enrolled by genealogy, males from three years old and upwards, all who entered the house of the LORD as the duty of each day required, for their service according to their offices, by their divisions. ¹⁷ The enrollment of the priests was according to their fathers' houses; that of the Levites from twenty years old and upwards was according to their offices, by their divisions. ¹⁸ The priests were enrolled with all their little children, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, the whole multitude; for they were faithful in keeping themselves holy. ¹⁹ And for the sons

of Aaron, the priests, who were in the fields of common land belonging to their cities, there were men in the several cities who were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to every one among the Levites who was enrolled.

20 Thus Hezeki'ah did throughout all Judah; and he did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God. ²¹ And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.

32 After these things and these acts of faithfulness Sennach'erib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them for himself. ² And when Hezeki'ah saw that Sennach'erib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, ³ he planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. ⁴ A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" ⁵ He set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down, and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall; and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. He also made weapons and shields in abundance. ⁶ And he set combat commanders over the people, and gathered them together to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, ⁷ "Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with

u Vg: Heb and raised upon the towers

kiah re-established them, and saw that they were provided for. 11-21: Compare 1 Chr.23.7-23.

32.1-33: The invasion of Sennacherib and the end of Hezekiah's reign. Based upon 2 Kg. 18.13-20.21, with much omission and some addition. 1: From 2 Kg.18.13, with the change of "and took them" to *thinking to win them for himself*. 2-8: These preparations for the siege were

him; for there is one greater with us than with him. ⁸ With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people took confidence from the words of Hezeki'ah king of Judah.

⁹ After this Sennach'erib king of Assyria, who was besieging Lachish with all his forces, sent his servants to Jerusalem to Hezeki'ah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah that were in Jerusalem, saying, ¹⁰ "Thus says Sennach'erib king of Assyria, 'On what are you relying, that you stand siege in Jerusalem?' ¹¹ Is not Hezeki'ah misleading you, that he may give you over to die by famine and by thirst, when he tells you, 'The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria'? ¹² Has not this same Hezeki'ah taken away his high places and his altars and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, 'Before one altar you shall worship, and upon it you shall burn your sacrifices'? ¹³ Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of my hand? ¹⁴ Who among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed was able to deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? ¹⁵ Now therefore do not let Hezeki'ah deceive you or mislead you in this fashion, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you out of my hand!'"

¹⁶ And his servants said still more against the Lord God and against his servant Hezeki'ah. ¹⁷ And he wrote letters to cast contempt on the LORD the God of Israel and to speak against him, saying, "Like the gods of the

nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hands, so the God of Hezeki'ah will not deliver his people from my hand." ¹⁸ And they shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were upon the wall, to frighten and terrify them, in order that they might take the city. ¹⁹ And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands.

²⁰ Then Hezeki'ah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven. ²¹ And the LORD sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword. ²² So the LORD saved Hezeki'ah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennach'erib king of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies; and he gave them rest on every side. ²³ And many brought gifts to the LORD to Jerusalem and precious things to Hezeki'ah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time onward.

²⁴ In those days Hezeki'ah became sick and was at the point of death, and he prayed to the LORD; and he answered him and gave him a sign. ²⁵ But Hezeki'ah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶ But Hezeki'ah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezeki'ah.

²⁷ And Hezeki'ah had very great

added by the Chronicler from a source now lost. **9-19:** A greatly condensed version of 2 Kg. 18.17-35. **20:** This single sentence is a condensation of the long passage, 2 Kg. 19.1-34. **21:** The Chronicler's version of 2 Kg. 19.35-37. **22-23:** The Chronicler's comments on the preceding part of the chapter **24-26:** A condensation of 2 Kg. 20.1-19 (Is. chs. 38-39), showing that

riches and honor; and he made for himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of costly vessels; ²⁸ storehouses also for the yield of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of cattle, and sheepfolds. ²⁹ He likewise provided cities for himself, and flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very great possessions. ³⁰ This same Hezeki'ah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezeki'ah prospered in all his works. ³¹ And so in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to try him and to know all that was in his heart.

³² Now the rest of the acts of Hezeki'ah, and his good deeds, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ³³ And Hezeki'ah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the ascent of the tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honor at his death. And Manas'sseh his son reigned in his stead.

33 Manas'sseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. ² He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the

people of Israel. ³ For he rebuilt the high places which his father Hezeki'ah had broken down, and erected altars to the Ba'als, and made Ashe'rahs, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them. ⁴ And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever." ⁵ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶ And he burned his sons as an offering in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and practiced soothsaying and augury and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ⁷ And the image of the idol which he had made he set in the house of God, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name for ever; ⁸ and I will no more remove the foot of Israel from the land which I appointed for your fathers, if only they will be careful to do all that I have commanded them, all the law, the statutes, and the ordinances given through Moses." ⁹ Manas'sseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they did more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Manas'sseh and to his people, but they gave no heed. ¹¹ Therefore the LORD brought upon them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manas'sseh with hooks and bound him

Hezekiah was very good, but not quite perfect. **27-29:** Compare 2 Kg.20.13. **30:** Compare vv. 3-4 and see 2 Kg.20.20-21 n. **31:** Further comment on 2 Kg.20.12-19. **32-33:** Slightly expanded from 2 Kg.20.20-21. The reference to *the vision of Isaiah the prophet* is not necessarily to the canonical book of this prophet, which does, however, contain material on Hezekiah (Is. chs. 36-39; compare Is.1.1).

33.1-25: The bad beginning of Manasseh; his punishment and repentance; the evil reign of Amon. This chapter is unusual in that it presents a king of Judah, Manasseh, as less evil than he appears in 2 Kings. Perhaps the Chronicler could not believe that Manasseh was wholly bad, since he reigned longer than any other king of Israel or Judah. **1-9:** These verses follow closely their source, 2 Kg.21.1-9. **10-13:** There is no hint of Manasseh's captivity and release in 2 Kings, though his name appears in Assyrian inscriptions as a vassal of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, sometimes under suspicion. Thus the Babylonian captivity of Manasseh is historically

with fetters of bronze and brought him to Babylon. ¹² And when he was in distress he entreated the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. ¹³ He prayed to him, and God received his entreaty and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manas'sseh knew that the LORD was God.

¹⁴ Afterwards he built an outer wall for the city of David west of Gihon, in the valley, and for the entrance into the Fish Gate, and carried it round Ophel, and raised it to a very great height; he also put commanders of the army in all the fortified cities in Judah. ¹⁵ And he took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside of the city. ¹⁶ He also restored the altar of the LORD and offered upon it sacrifices of peace offerings and of thanksgiving; and he commanded Judah to serve the LORD the God of Israel. ¹⁷ Nevertheless the people still sacrificed at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

¹⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Manas'sseh, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD the God of Israel, behold, they are in the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁹ And his prayer, and how God received his entreaty, and all his sin and his faithlessness, and the sites on which he built high places and set up the Ashe'rim and the images, before

he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the Chronicles of the Seers.^v ²⁰ So Manas'sseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his house; and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

²¹ Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. ²² He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manas'sseh his father had done. Amon sacrificed to all the images that Manas'sseh his father had made, and served them. ²³ And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as Manas'sseh his father had humbled himself, but this Amon incurred guilt more and more. ²⁴ And his servants conspired against him and killed him in his house. ²⁵ But the people of the land slew all those who had conspired against King Amon; and the people of the land made Josi'ah his son king in his stead.

34 Josi'ah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ² He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. ³ For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Ashe'rim, and the graven and the molten images. ⁴ And they broke down the altars of the Ba'als in his presence; and he hewed down the incense altars which stood above them; and he broke in pieces the Ashe'rim and the graven

^v One Ms: Gk: Heb of Hozai

possible, though the Chronicler uses it here as divine punishment to bring the sinning king to repentance. This repentance is somewhat doubtful in view of 2 Kg.21.10-17. **14-17:** None of these verses, except the last, has any parallel. Verse 17 shows that the reform fell short of perfection; compare 2 Kg.21.16, which is much stronger in condemnation. **18-20:** These verses are a new version of 2 Kg.21.17-18 in the light of the Chronicler's own interpretation of the reign of Manasseh. **21-25:** From 2 Kg.21.19-24, and in agreement with the source in the low evaluation of Amon; v. 23 has been rewritten to conform to the new evaluation of Manasseh.

34.1-33: The good reign of Josiah; his reforms and the finding of the book of the law. The Chronicler pictures Josiah as the great reformer, the best king since David and Solomon, and the last good king. 2 Kg.22.1-23.30 is in basic agreement on the character and importance of Josiah. **3-7:** These verses transfer the great reform from a time after the finding of the book of

and the molten images, and he made dust of them and strewed it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.⁵ He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and purged Judah and Jerusalem.⁶ And in the cities of Manas'seh, E'phraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naph'tali, in their ruins^w round about,⁷ he broke down the altars, and beat the Ashe'rim and the images into powder, and hewed down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azali'ah, and Ma-asei'ah the governor of the city, and Jo'ah the son of Jo'ahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.⁹ They came to Hilki'ah the high priest and delivered the money that had been brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the keepers of the threshold, had collected from Manas'seh and E'phraim and from all the remnant of Israel and from all Judah and Benjamin and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem.¹⁰ They delivered it to the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD gave it for repairing and restoring the house.¹¹ They gave it to the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone, and timber for binders and beams for the buildings which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.¹² And the men did the work faithfully. Over them were set Jahath and Obadi'ah the Levites, of the sons of Merar'i, and Zechari'ah and Meshul'lam, of the sons of the Ko'hathites, to have oversight. The Levites, all who were skilful with instruments of music,¹³ were over the burden bearers and directed

all who did work in every kind of service; and some of the Levites were scribes, and officials, and gatekeepers.

14 While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilki'ah the priest found the book of the law of the LORD given through Moses.¹⁵ Then Hilki'ah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD"; and Hilki'ah gave the book to Shaphan.¹⁶ Shaphan brought the book to the king, and further reported to the king, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing."¹⁷ They have emptied out the money that was found in the house of the LORD and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen."¹⁸ Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilki'ah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

19 When the king heard the words of the law he rent his clothes.²⁰ And the king commanded Hilki'ah, Ahi'kam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asai'ah the king's servant, saying,²¹ "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

22 So Hilki'ah and those whom the king had sent^x went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect.²³ And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent

^w Heb uncertain ^x Syr Vg: Heb lacks *had sent*

the law to a time near the beginning of Josiah's reign (compare 2 Kg.23.4-20). *The Asherim*, see 1 Kg.14.15 n. 8-13: The repair of the temple. This paragraph follows 2 Kg.22.3-7, but with more attention to the Levites, the musicians, and the help from the territory of the former northern kingdom. 14-18: The finding of the book of the law. This account is not essentially different from its source, 2 Kg.22.8-10 (see note there). 19-28: Very similar to its source, 2 Kg.

you to me, ²⁴ Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which was read before the king of Judah. ²⁵ Because they have forsaken me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath will be poured out upon this place and will not be quenched. ²⁶ But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words which you have heard, ²⁷ because your heart was penitent and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me, and have rent your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the LORD. ²⁸ Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.' And they brought back word to the king.

²⁹ Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰ And the king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD. ³¹ And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of

the covenant that were written in this book. ³² Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. ³³ And Josi'ah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel, and made all who were in Israel serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not turn away from following the LORD the God of their fathers.

35 Josi'ah kept a passover to the LORD in Jerusalem; and they killed the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. ² He appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD. ³ And he said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built; you need no longer carry it upon your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel. ⁴ Prepare yourselves according to your fathers' houses by your divisions, following the directions of David king of Israel and the directions of Solomon his son. ⁵ And stand in the holy place according to the groupings of the fathers' houses of your brethren the lay people, and let there be for each a part of a father's house of the Levites. ⁶ And kill the passover lamb, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare for your brethren, to do according to the word of the LORD by Moses."

⁷ Then Josi'ah contributed to the lay people, as passover offerings for all that were present, lambs and kids from the flock to the number of thirty

y Heb obscure

22.11–20 (see notes there). **29–33:** Expanded from 2 Kg.23.1–3. **30:** *The Levites* are substituted for "the prophets." **32:** *Benjamin* is added; the word *stand* means "adhere." **33:** A kind of summary of 2 Kg.23.4–20.

35.1–27: Josiah's great passover celebration; his tragic mistake and consequent death. **1–6:** 2 Kg.23.21–23 tells us that Josiah kept the greatest passover of any up to his time, but gives no details. The Chronicler seizes the opportunity to describe in detail what he regarded as the most important festival, as it was kept in his time, or as it ought to be kept in the future. Verse 4 refers to 1 Chr. chs. 24–26. **7–9:** Compare 1 Chr.29.6–9. **10–15:** A prominent place is given to

thousand, and three thousand bulls; these were from the king's possessions. ⁸ And his princes contributed willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilki'ah, Zechari'ah, and Jehi'el, the chief officers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the pass-over offerings two thousand six hundred lambs and kids and three hundred bulls. ⁹ Conani'ah also, and Shemai'ah and Nethan'el his brothers, and Hashabi'ah and Je-i'el and Jo'zabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave to the Levites for the passover offerings five thousand lambs and kids and five hundred bulls.

¹⁰ When the service had been prepared for, the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their divisions according to the king's command. ¹¹ And they killed the passover lamb, and the priests sprinkled the blood which they received from them while the Levites flayed the victims. ¹² And they set aside the burnt offerings that they might distribute them according to the groupings of the fathers' houses of the lay people, to offer to the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so they did with the bulls. ¹³ And they roasted the passover lamb with fire according to the ordinance; and they boiled the holy offerings in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and carried them quickly to all the lay people. ¹⁴ And afterward they prepared for themselves and for the priests, because the priests the sons of Aaron were busy in offering the burnt offerings and the fat parts until night; so the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests the sons of Aaron. ¹⁵ The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place according to the command of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jedu'thun the king's seer; and the gatekeepers were at each

gate; they did not need to depart from their service, for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

¹⁶ So all the service of the LORD was prepared that day, to keep the pass-over and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josi'ah. ¹⁷ And the people of Israel who were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. ¹⁸ No passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet; none of the kings of Israel had kept such a passover as was kept by Josi'ah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josi'ah this passover was kept.

²⁰ After all this, when Josi'ah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphra'tes and Josi'ah went out against him. ²¹ But he sent envoys to him, saying, "What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war; and God has commanded me to make haste. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you."

²² Nevertheless Josi'ah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but joined battle in the plain of Megid'do. ²³ And the archers shot King Josi'ah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded." ²⁴ So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died, and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for

the Levites and the singers (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles). **16-19:** Compare 2 Kg.23.22-23. **20-24:** A greatly expanded version of 2 Kg.23.29-30; some of the added details are doubtless historically correct. The most characteristic touch of the Chronicler is in describing *the words of Neco* as coming from *the mouth of God* (v. 22). Only thus could a man who believed every misfortune a direct punishment from God explain the untimely death of the otherwise righteous Josiah. **25:** Strangely enough *Jeremiah* the prophet is not mentioned in 2 Kings. The Chronicler

Josi'ah. ²⁵ Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josi'ah; and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josi'ah in their laments to this day. They made these an ordinance in Israel; behold, they are written in the Laments. ²⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Josi'ah, and his good deeds according to what is written in the law of the LORD, ²⁷ and his acts, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

36 The people of the land took Jeho'ahaz the son of Josi'ah and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. ² Jeho'ahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. ³ Then the king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and laid upon the land a tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ⁴ And the king of Egypt made Eli'akim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoi'akim; but Neco took Jeho'ahaz his brother and carried him to Egypt.

⁵ Jehoi'akim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. ⁶ Against him came up Nebuchadnezz'zar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters to take him to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezz'zar also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon. ⁸ Now the

rest of the acts of Jehoi'akim, and the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah; and Jehoi'achin his son reigned in his stead.

⁹ Jehoi'achin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹⁰ In the spring of the year King Nebuchadnezz'zar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedeki'ah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹ Zedeki'ah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. ¹² He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. ¹³ He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezz'zar, who had made him swear by God; he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁴ All the leading priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

¹⁵ The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwell-

here makes good the omission (compare Jer.1.2; 3.6; 22.10,15). *The Laments* mentioned here are not to be confused with the canonical book of Lamentations. **26-27**: A characteristic expansion of 2 Kg.23.28.

36.1-23: The last agonies of the doomed nation. The goodness of David, Solomon, Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah was not sufficient, and the apostate nation was doomed (compare 34.24-28). The source is 2 Kg.23.30b-25.21, with some condensation and much rewriting near the end. **1-4**: The ill-fated reign of Jehoahaz, taken with slight condensation from 2 Kg.23.30b-34. **5-8**: Much abridged from 2 Kg.23.36-24.6. In v. 6 Jehoiaikim seems to be taken to *Babylon*, contrary to the source, 2 Kg.24.6 (compare Dan.1.1-2). Verse 7 is added, anticipating v. 10 (compare Dan.1.2). **9-10**: The story of *Jehoiachin* is drastically abridged from 2 Kg.24.8-17. The correct age in v. 9 is not *eight years*, but eighteen years (compare 2 Kg.24.8). Tablets from Babylonia disclose that by 592 B.C. he had five sons. **11-13**: Based on 2 Kg.24.18-20, but with certain changes, such as the dropping of the names of the king's mother and grandfather, the introduction of *Jeremiah the prophet* (see 35.25 n. and compare Jer. chs. 37-39), and the mention of the king's oath (compare Ezek.17.16). **14**: There is no parallel to this in 2 Kings, where the blame is laid chiefly on the king (compare Jer. ch. 7; Ezek. ch. 8). The Chronicler does not

ing place; ¹⁶ but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, till there was no remedy.

17 Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chalde'ans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged; he gave them all into his hand. ¹⁸ And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. ¹⁹ And they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious vessels. ²⁰ He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to

him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.

22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: ²³ "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.'"

include the Levites and musicians in his condemnation. **15-16:** The Chronicler is fond of the theme of the unheeded prophet (compare 12.5-8; 15.1-8; 19.1-3; 21.12-15; 25.7-9,15-17; Jer.26.20-24; 29.16-20; 35.14-15). **17-21:** A condensation of 2 Kg.25.1-21, with additional references to *the establishment of the kingdom of Persia* (compare v. 22), the prophecies of *Jeremiah* (compare Jer.25.11-12; 29.10), and the *sabbaths* (sabbatical years; compare Lev. 25.1-7; 26.27-39). **22-23:** This note of hope is reproduced here from what immediately follows, Ezra 1.1-3, where it more properly belongs. In the work of this author, 1 and 2 Chronicles portray the downfall, Ezra and Nehemiah the restoration of God's people. In the present arrangement of the Hebrew Old Testament, 2 Chronicles is the last book; apparently an editor added these verses so that the Old Testament would not end on a note of doom (compare 2 Kg.25.27-30 and see note there).

THE BOOK OF EZRA

Anciently several books circulated under the name of Ezra, not only our Ezra and Nehemiah as a single book, but others now preserved in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Our Ezra-Nehemiah is by the Chronicler (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles), prepared as a supplement to Chronicles on the basis of Hebrew and Aramaic documents, memoirs of Nehemiah, a memorial of Ezra, genealogies, and archives. Chronicles ends with the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of treasure and captives. This supplement, the first verses of which appear also at the end of Chronicles, was written to tell how some returned from captivity and labored at restoring religion at a restored temple in a refortified Jerusalem (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 13). Among the exiles, religion, their strong bond of unity, had developed; whereas among those who remained and had mingled largely with the local and incoming peoples, religion had declined. During the exile religious interest had concentrated particularly on the laws associated with the name of Moses, and had fostered that exclusiveness which became so characteristic of Judaism. Thus the returned exiles were concerned not only with reconstruction of altar, temple, and city, but with social and religious problems, freeing the community of foreign elements, and establishing religious practice in stricter conformity to their understanding of Mosaic law. To the Chronicler the returned exiles were a godly remnant with a religious mission.

There seem to have been four stages of the return: (1) a return under Cyrus (about 538 B.C.) led by Sheshbazzar, who commenced rebuilding the temple but, under local opposition, had to leave it unfinished; (2) a return under Darius I (521-485) led by Zerubbabel and Jeshua, who also encountered opposition but, with encouragement from the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, completed the temple; (3) a group led by Nehemiah who came twice under Artaxerxes I (464-423) to build the walls of Jerusalem, still against opposition from the local groups, and to attempt to establish purity of community and worship, only to find, on returning for a second period of administration, his social and religious reforms undone; (4) a return under Artaxerxes II (404-358) led by Ezra, who brought a codification of the Mosaic law and found a community which had again backslidden.

The text of the Chronicler's supplement has been dislocated in transmission, some of the Nehemiah material appearing in Ezra, and Ezra material in Nehemiah, so that it no longer reads chronologically. Often the order is better preserved in the apocryphal book I Esdras. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are more intelligible if read in the order Ezra ch. 1; 2.1-70 (Neh.7.6-73a); 3.1-4.6; 4.24-6.22; 4.7-23; Neh.1.1-7.5; chs. 11-13; 9.38-10.39; Ezra chs. 7-10; Neh.8.1-9.37. An editor about 300 B.C., faced with this textual confusion, endeavored to ease it by supplying connecting sentences and by insertions, such as the name of Nehemiah in Neh.8.9 and Ezra in Neh.12.26,36.

IN THE FIRST YEAR OF CYRUS KING OF Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:

2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth,

and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³ Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem; ⁴ and let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods

1.1-4: Cyrus' decree. His *first year* at Babylon was 538 B.C., and his proclamation seemed the fulfillment of Jer.29.10 (2 Chr.36.21) under divine direction (Is.44.28; 45.1-3). **2-3:** In his inscriptions Cyrus shows interest in restoring temples. To him the LORD is the local deity of Jerusalem (6.12), whose temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar (5.12).

and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem."

5 Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, every one whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem; ⁶ and all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered. ⁷ Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the LORD which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. ⁸ Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Shesh-baz'zar the prince of Judah. ⁹ And this was the number of them: a thousand^a basins of gold, a thousand basins of silver, twenty-nine censers, ¹⁰ thirty bowls of gold, two thousand^b four hundred and ten bowls of silver, and a thousand other vessels; ¹¹ all the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand four hundred and sixty-nine.^c All these did Shesh-baz'zar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

2 Now these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia; they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town. ² They came with Zerub'babel, Jeshua, Nehemi'ah, Serai'ah, Re-el-ai'ah, Mor'decai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigva'i, Rehum, and Ba'anah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel: ³ the sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two. ⁴ The sons of Shephati'ah,

three hundred and seventy-two. ⁵ The sons of Arah, seven hundred and seventy-five. ⁶ The sons of Pa'hath-moab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Jo'ab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve. ⁷ The sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four. ⁸ The sons of Zattu, nine hundred and forty-five. ⁹ The sons of Zac'cai, seven hundred and sixty. ¹⁰ The sons of Bani, six hundred and forty-two. ¹¹ The sons of Be'bai, six hundred and twenty-three. ¹² The sons of Azgad, one thousand two hundred and twenty-two. ¹³ The sons of Adoni'kam, six hundred and sixty-six. ¹⁴ The sons of Bigva'i, two thousand and fifty-six. ¹⁵ The sons of Adin, four hundred and fifty-four. ¹⁶ The sons of Ater, namely of Hezeki'ah, ninety-eight. ¹⁷ The sons of Be'zai, three hundred and twenty-three. ¹⁸ The sons of Jorah, one hundred and twelve. ¹⁹ The sons of Hashum, two hundred and twenty-three. ²⁰ The sons of Gibbar, ninety-five. ²¹ The sons of Bethlehem, one hundred and twenty-three. ²² The men of Neto'phah, fifty-six. ²³ The men of An'athoth, one hundred and twenty-eight. ²⁴ The sons of Az'maveth, forty-two. ²⁵ The sons of Kir'iathar'im, Chephi'rah, and Be'er'oth, seven hundred and forty-three. ²⁶ The sons of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one. ²⁷ The men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two. ²⁸ The men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three. ²⁹ The sons of Nebo, fifty-two. ³⁰ The sons of Magbish, one hundred and fifty-six. ³¹ The sons of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four. ³² The sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty. ³³ The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-five. ³⁴ The sons of Jeri-

^a 1 Esdras 2.13: Heb *thirty*

^b 1 Esdras 2.13: Heb *of a second sort*

^c 1 Esdras 2.14: Heb *five thousand four hundred*

1.5-11: Gifts for refurbishing the temple, including the return of the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kg.25.14-16). **8: Mithredath** (Mithridates) was temple treasurer. *Sheshbazzar* is the Babylonian name of a Jewish court official. **9-11: These numbers vary in different texts and are uncertain.**

2.1-70: A census of the first return (= Neh.7.6-73a), covering five groups: leaders, laymen, temple officials, those of dubious genealogy, servants, and animals. *Sons of and men of* are

cho, three hundred and forty-five.

³⁵ The sons of Sena'ah, three thousand six hundred and thirty.

³⁶ The priests: the sons of Jedai'ah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three. ³⁷ The sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two. ³⁸ The sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven. ³⁹ The sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

⁴⁰ The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kad'mi-el, of the sons of Hodavi'ah, seventy-four. ⁴¹ The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and twenty-eight. ⁴² The sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hati'ta, and the sons of Sho'bai, in all one hundred and thirty-nine.

⁴³ The temple servants:^d the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasu'pha, the sons of Tabba'oth, ⁴⁴ the sons of Keros, the sons of Si'aha, the sons of Padon, ⁴⁵ the sons of Leba'nah, the sons of Hag'abah, the sons of Akkub, ⁴⁶ the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shamlai, the sons of Hanan, ⁴⁷ the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Re-ai'ah, ⁴⁸ the sons of Rezin, the sons of Neko'da, the sons of Gazzam, ⁴⁹ the sons of Uzza, the sons of Pase'ah, the sons of Besai, ⁵⁰ the sons of Asnah, the sons of Me-u'nim, the sons of Nephi'sim, ⁵¹ the sons of Bakkub, the sons of Haku'pha, the sons of Harhur, ⁵² the sons of Bazluth, the sons of Mehi'da, the sons of Harsha, ⁵³ the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sis'era, the sons of Temah, ⁵⁴ the sons of Nezi'ah, and the sons of Hati'pha.

⁵⁵ The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of So'tai, the sons of Hasso'phereth, the sons of Peru'da, ⁵⁶ the sons of Ja'alalah, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, ⁵⁷ the sons of Shephati'ah, the sons of Hattil, the sons

of Po'chereth-hazzeba'im, and the sons of Ami.

⁵⁸ All the temple servants^d and the sons of Solomon's servants were three hundred and ninety-two.

⁵⁹ The following were those who came up from Tel-me'lah, Tel-har'sha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer, though they could not prove their fathers' houses or their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: ⁶⁰ the sons of Delai'ah, the sons of Tobi'ah, and the sons of Neko'da, six hundred and fifty-two. ⁶¹ Also, of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habai'ah, the sons of Hakkoz, and the sons of Barzil'lai (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzil'lai the Gileadite, and was called by their name). ⁶² These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean; ⁶³ the governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim.

⁶⁴ The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, ⁶⁵ besides their menservants and maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred male and female singers. ⁶⁶ Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules were two hundred and forty-five, ⁶⁷ their camels were four hundred and thirty-five, and their asses were six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

⁶⁸ Some of the heads of families, when they came to the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, made freewill offerings for the house of God, to erect it on its site; ⁶⁹ according to their ability they gave to the treasury of the work sixty-one thousand darics of

d Heb *nethinim*

equivalent phrases. **36-39:** There are only four priestly groups as against twenty-four in 1 Chr. ch. 24. **43,58:** *The temple servants* are the Nethinim (lit., "those given" [to the temple]; see 1 Chr. 9.2; Jos.9.27 n.), many of whose names are non-Jewish. **63:** *The governor* is Sheshbazzar. *Urim and Thummim* are the sacred lots (1 Sam.14.41; Dt.33.8). **64:** This total exceeds the numbers of the various groups; it doubtless includes others unmentioned. **69:** A *daric* was a Persian gold

gold, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.

70 The priests, the Levites, and some of the people lived in Jerusalem and its vicinity;^e and the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their towns, and all Israel in their towns.

3 When the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem. ² Then arose Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el with his kinsmen, and they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. ³ They set the altar in its place, for fear was upon them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings upon it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening. ⁴ And they kept the feast of booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the ordinance, as each day required, ⁵ and after that the continual burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon and at all the appointed feasts of the LORD, and the offerings of every one who made a freewill offering to the LORD. ⁶ From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid. ⁷ So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sido'nians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea,

to Joppa, according to the grant which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

8 Now in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el and Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their brethren, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of the LORD. ⁹ And Jeshua with his sons and his kinsmen, and Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Judah, together took the oversight of the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Hen'adad and the Levites, their sons and kinsmen.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel; ¹¹ and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, "For he is good,

for his steadfast love endures for ever toward Israel."

And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. ¹² But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who

^e 1 Esdras 5.46: Heb lacks *lived in Jerusalem and its vicinity*

coin, a *mina* a Mesopotamian weight for precious metals. The amount differs from that mentioned in Neh.7.70-72.

3.1-13: **Rebuilding the temple.** This had commenced under Sheshbazzar (5.14-16) but stopped, and recommenced now under Zerubbabel and Jeshua, leaders of the second return, who *built the altar* as center for the temple cultus. The *seventh month* would be Tishri (September-October) of 520 B.C., in the second year of Darius I (Hag.2.1-4). 2: *The law of Moses* is not our Pentateuch, but the body of laws associated with Moses' name. Once the altar was *set*, the religious life with *morning and evening* sacrifice, annual feasts such as *booths* (tabernacles), etc., could be recommenced, and then the temple built. 7: Compare Solomon's preparations in 2 Chr.2.1-11. Minted *money* was known in the Persian period, though payment in kind was more common. 10-11: The laying of the foundation was celebrated with music and praise. For the directions of David see 2 Chr.29.25-30.

had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy;¹³ so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard afar.

4 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel,² they approached Zerub'babel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, "Let us build with you; for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of E'sar-had'don king of Assyria who brought us here."³ But Zerub'babel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses in Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us."

4 Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build,⁵ and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

6 And in the reign of Ahasu-e'rus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

7 And in the days of Ar-ta-xerx'es, Bishlam and Mith'redath and Tab'eel and the rest of their associates wrote to

Ar-ta-xerx'es king of Persia; the letter was written in Aramaic and translated.^f ⁸ Rehum the commander and Shim'shai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Ar-ta-xerx'es the king as follows—⁹ then wrote Rehum the commander, Shim'shai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites,¹⁰ and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnap'par deported and settled in the cities of Sama'ria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, and now¹¹ this is a copy of the letter that they sent—"To Ar-ta-xerx'es the king: Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now¹² be it known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.¹³ Now be it known to the king that, if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired.¹⁴ Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king,¹⁵ in order that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. You will find in the book of the records and learn that this city is a rebellious

^f Heb adds *in Aramaic*, indicating that 4.8-6.18 is in Aramaic. Another interpretation is *The letter was written in the Aramaic script and set forth in the Aramaic language*

4.1-6: Opposition to the rebuilding of the temple. The rejoicing alerted neighboring mixed groups who claimed fellowship in religion (2 Kg.17.24-28). *Esarhaddon* settled groups there in 676 B.C. **3:** The phrase *we alone* evidences the exclusiveness which turned these neighbors into adversaries. **5:** The counselors would plead their case at court. *Cyrus* died in 529 B.C. *Darius* reigned 521-485. *Ahasuerus* Xerxes I, reigned 485-464.

4.7-23. Opposition to the rebuilding of the city. A misplaced section belonging probably between Ezra ch. 10 and Neh. ch. 1, but inserted here as dealing also with opposition to rebuilding. Artaxerxes reigned 464-423 B.C. The Aramaic letter to him is from his local officials, authorized by the commander, and written by the scribe. **10:** *Osnapper* apparently means Assurbanipal (668-630 B.C.). *Beyond the river* denotes the Syro-Palestinian region west of the Euphrates. **13:** The revenues expected by the Persian treasury were the provincial *tribute*, the *custom* levies for provincial expenses, and *toll* for upkeep of the roads. **15:** For such books of

city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from of old. That was why this city was laid waste. ¹⁶ We make known to the king that, if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River."

17 The king sent an answer: "To Rehum the commander and Shim'shai the scribe and the rest of their associates who live in Sama'ria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, greeting. And now ¹⁸ the letter which you sent to us has been plainly read before me. ¹⁹ And I made a decree, and search has been made, and it has been found that this city from of old has risen against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it. ²⁰ And mighty kings have been over Jerusalem, who ruled over the whole province Beyond the River, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid. ²¹ Therefore make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me. ²² And take care not to be slack in this matter; why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?"

23 Then, when the copy of King Ar-ta-xerxes' letter was read before Rehum and Shim'shai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease. ²⁴ Then the work on the house of God which is in Jerusalem stopped; and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

5 Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechari'ah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. ² Then Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el and Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak arose

and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.

3 At the same time Tat'tenai the governor of the province Beyond the River and She'thar-boz'enai and their associates came to them and spoke to them thus, "Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?" ⁴ They^s also asked them this, "What are the names of the men who are building this building?" ⁵ But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them till a report should reach Darius and then answer be returned by letter concerning it.

6 The copy of the letter which Tat'tenai the governor of the province Beyond the River and She'thar-boz'enai and his associates the governors who were in the province Beyond the River sent to Darius the king; ⁷ they sent him a report, in which was written as follows: "To Darius the king, all peace. ⁸ Be it known to the king that we went to the province of Judah, to the house of the great God. It is being built with huge stones, and timber is laid in the walls; this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands. ⁹ Then we asked those elders and spoke to them thus, 'Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?' ¹⁰ We also asked them their names, for your information, that we might write down the names of the men at their head. ¹¹ And this was their reply to us: 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished. ¹² But because our fathers had angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the

g Gk Syr: Aramaic We

records see Est.2.23; 6.1; Mal.3.16. *Laid waste*, see 2 Kg.24.13–15. **23.** *Made them cease.* This situation introduces Neh. ch. 1

4.24–6.22. *The rebuilding continued.* Verse 24 follows naturally on v. 5, taking us back to the reign of Darius, in whose second year the prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the building (Hag.1.1–4; 2.1–4; Zech.4.9; 6.15). **5.3:** *Tattenai* appears in cuneiform tablets as governor of the province *Beyond the River*. **11:** *The great king* was Solomon. **14:** *The temple*

hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried away the people to Babylonia. ¹³ However in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house of God should be rebuilt. ¹⁴ And the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon, these Cyrus the king took out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered to one whose name was Shesh-baz'zar, whom he had made governor; ¹⁵ and he said to him, "Take these vessels, go and put them in the temple which is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its site." ¹⁶ Then this Shesh-baz'zar came and laid the foundations of the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and from that time until now it has been in building, and it is not yet finished.' ¹⁷ Therefore, if it seem good to the king, let search be made in the royal archives there in Babylon, to see whether a decree was issued by Cyrus the king for the rebuilding of this house of God in Jerusalem. And let the king send us his pleasure in this matter."

6 Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in Babylonia, in the house of the archives where the documents were stored. ² And in Ecbat'ana, the capital which is in the province of Media, a scroll was found on which this was written: "A record. ³ In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king issued a decree: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices are offered and burnt offerings are brought; its height shall be sixty cubits and its breadth sixty cubits, ⁴ with three courses of great stones and one course of timber; let the cost be paid from

the royal treasury. ⁵ And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and brought back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; you shall put them in the house of God.

6 "Now therefore, Tat'tenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, She'thar-boz'enai, and your associates the governors who are in the province Beyond the River, keep away; ⁷ let the work on this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site. ⁸ Moreover I make a decree regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God; the cost is to be paid to these men in full and without delay from the royal revenue, the tribute of the province from Beyond the River. ⁹ And whatever is needed—young bulls, rams, or sheep for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, as the priests at Jerusalem require—let that be given to them day by day without fail, ¹⁰ that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. ¹¹ Also I make a decree that if any one alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of his house, and he shall be impaled upon it, and his house shall be made a dunghill. ¹² May the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow any king or people that shall put forth a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius make a decree; let it be done with all diligence."

13 Then, according to the word sent by Darius the king, Tat'tenai, the governor of the province Beyond the River, She'thar-boz'enai, and their associates did with all diligence what

of Babylon would be that of Marduk. **17:** *Royal archives*, the king's treasury of 7.20; compare 6.1. **6.2:** *Ecbatana* was the king's summer residence. **7:** *Governor* probably means Zerubbabel (see Hag.2.21). **9:** Provision is made for the burnt offering (Lev. ch. 1), meal offering, (Lev.2.1-13), and drink offering (Lev.23.13). **11:** The punishment for interference was impalement, on which see Est.2.23; 9.14; Herodotus, *Hist.* III, 159. To make a house a dunghill was the limit

Darius the king had ordered. ¹⁴ And the elders of the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechari'ah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by command of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Ar-ta-xerx'es king of Persia; ¹⁵ and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. ¹⁷ They offered at the dedication of this house of God one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁸ And they set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written in the book of Moses.

19 On the fourteenth day of the first month the returned exiles kept the passover. ²⁰ For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were clean. So they killed the passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves; ²¹ it was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the pollutions of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. ²² And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days

with joy; for the LORD had made them joyful, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

7 Now after this, in the reign of Ar-ta-xerx'es king of Persia, Ezra the son of Serai'ah, son of Azari'ah, son of Hilki'ah, ² son of Shallum, son of Zaddok, son of Ahi'tub, ³ son of Amari'ah, son of Azari'ah, son of Merai'oth, ⁴ son of Zerahi'ah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, ⁵ son of Abi'shu-a, son of Phin'chas, son of Elea'zar, son of Aaron the chief priest— ⁶ this Ezra went up from Babylonia. He was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses which the LORD the God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was upon him.

7 And there went up also to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Ar-ta-xerx'es the king, some of the people of Israel, and some of the priests and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers, and the temple servants. ⁸ And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king; ⁹ for on the first day of the first month he began^b to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was upon him. ¹⁰ For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel.

11 This is a copy of the letter which King Ar-ta-xerx'es gave to Ezra the

^h Vg See Syr: Heb that was the foundation of the going up

of contempt (2 Kg.10.27; Dan.2.5). 15: *Adar*, the twelfth month (March-April). *The sixth year ... of Darius*, 516 B.C.; therefore *Artaxerxes* in v. 14 is a scribal interpolation on the ground of 4.7. 16-18: There was a dedication of the new temple as Solomon had dedicated his (1 Kg.8.5, 63), and only then could *priests and Levites* take up their *courses*. No such division of courses is contained in the Pentateuch. 19-22: Now also the feasts (e.g. *the passover* and then *unleavened bread*; Dt.16.1-8), could be celebrated by officiants ritually *clean*. 22: *King of Assyria*, perhaps because Persia now ruled the former Assyria.

7.1-10.16: *The history of Ezra*. This chronologically belongs after the story in Neh. chs. 1-7, and is continued in Neh. chs. 8-10. Almost one hundred and twenty years have elapsed when, under *Artaxerxes II* (404-358 B.C.), Ezra, with royal authority, led to Jerusalem another group comprising the same classes as the earlier group. Ezra's primary interest was in the code of the law (vv. 6,10,14).

priest, the scribe, learned in matters of the commandments of the LORD and his statutes for Israel: ¹² "Ar-ta-xerx'es, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven.^x And now ¹³ I make a decree that any one of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. ¹⁴ For you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of your God, which is in your hand, ¹⁵ and also to convey the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, ¹⁶ with all the silver and gold which you shall find in the whole province of Babylonia, and with the freewill offerings of the people and the priests, vowed willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem. ¹⁷ With this money, then, you shall with all diligence buy bulls, rams, and lambs, with their cereal offerings and their drink offerings, and you shall offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ Whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do, according to the will of your God. ¹⁹ The vessels that have been given you for the service of the house of your God, you shall deliver before the God of Jerusalem. ²⁰ And whatever else is required for the house of your God, which you have occasion to provide, you may provide it out of the king's treasury.

²¹ "And I, Ar-ta-xerx'es the king, make a decree to all the treasurers in the province Beyond the River: Whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires of you, be it done with all diligence, ²² up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths

of wine, a hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. ²³ Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done in full for the house of the God of heaven, lest his wrath be against the realm of the king and his sons. ²⁴ We also notify you that it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll upon any one of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the doorkeepers, the temple servants, or other servants of this house of God.

²⁵ "And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and those who do not know them, you shall teach. ²⁶ Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed upon him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment."

²⁷ Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, ²⁸ and who extended to me his steadfast love before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty officers. I took courage, for the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

8 These are the heads of their fathers' houses, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylonia, in the reign of Ar-ta-xerx'es the king: ² Of the sons of Phin'ehas, Gershom. Of the sons of Ith'amar, Daniel. Of the sons of David, Hattush, ³ of the sons of Shecani'ah. Of the sons of Parosh, Zechari'ah, with whom were registered one hundred

^x Aram adds a word of uncertain meaning

7.12-26: The king's letter is in Aramaic. **14:** For the *seven counselors* see Est.1.14; Herodotus, *Hist.* III, 84. **20:** The *king's treasury* must mean the provincial treasure house, see v. 21. **22:** For the equivalent of the *talent, cor, and bath*, see pp. 1530-1531. **24:** Temple functionaries are exempted from taxation. **25:** The *wisdom* of Ezra is that of the new law book of v. 14, which he was empowered to enforce through *magistrates and judges*, with four types of penalty.

and fifty men. ⁴ Of the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab, Eli-e-ho-e'nai the son of Zerahi'ah, and with him two hundred men. ⁵ Of the sons of Zattu,ⁱ Shecani'ah the son of Jaha'ziel, and with him three hundred men. ⁶ Of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty men. ⁷ Of the sons of Elam, Jeshai'ah the son of Athali'ah, and with him seventy men. ⁸ Of the sons of Shephati'ah, Zebadi'ah the son of Michael, and with him eighty men. ⁹ Of the sons of Jo'ab, Obadi'ah the son of Jehi'el, and with him two hundred and eighteen men. ¹⁰ Of the sons of Bani,^j Shelo'mith the son of Josi-phi'ah, and with him a hundred and sixty men. ¹¹ Of the sons of Be'bai, Zechari'ah, the son of Be'bai, and with him twenty-eight men. ¹² Of the sons of Azgad, Joha'nan the son of Hak'katan, and with him a hundred and ten men. ¹³ Of the sons of Adoni'kam, those who came later, their names being Eliph'elet, Jeu'el, and Shemai'ah, and with them sixty men. ¹⁴ Of the sons of Bigva'i, Uthai and Zaccur, and with them seventy men.

¹⁵ I gathered them to the river that runs to Aha'va, and there we encamped three days. As I reviewed the people and the priests, I found there none of the sons of Levi. ¹⁶ Then I sent for Elie'zer, Ar'i-el, Shemai'ah, Elna'than, Jarib, Elna'than, Nathan, Zechari'ah, and Meshul'lam, leading men, and for Joi'arib and Elna'than, who were men of insight, ¹⁷ and sent them to Iddo, the leading man at the place Casiphi'a, telling them what to say to Iddo and his brethren the temple servants^k at the place Casiphi'a, namely, to send us ministers for the house of our God. ¹⁸ And by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebi'ah with his sons and kinsmen,

eighteen; ¹⁹ also Hashabi'ah and with him Jeshai'ah of the sons of Merar'i, with his kinsmen and their sons, twenty; ²⁰ besides two hundred and twenty of the temple servants, whom David and his officials had set apart to attend the Levites. These were all mentioned by name.

²¹ Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Aha'va, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a straight way for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. ²² For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way; since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good upon all that seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all that forsake him." ²³ So we fasted and besought our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

²⁴ Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests: Sherebi'ah, Hashabi'ah, and ten of their kinsmen with them. ²⁵ And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his lords and all Israel there present had offered; ²⁶ I weighed out into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels worth a hundred talents, and a hundred talents of gold, ²⁷ twenty bowls of gold worth a thousand darics, and two vessels of fine bright bronze as precious as gold. ²⁸ And I said to them, "You are holy to the LORD, and the vessels are holy; and the silver and the gold are a free-will offering to the LORD, the God of your fathers. ²⁹ Guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the heads of fathers' houses in Israel at Jerusalem, within the chambers of the

ⁱ Gk 1 Esdras 8.32: Heb lacks of Zattu

^j Gk 1 Esdras 8.36: Heb lacks Bani

^k Heb *nethinim*

8.1-14: A list of priestly and lay clans who returned with Ezra. 15: The location of Ahava is unknown, but the river was doubtless a tributary of the Euphrates. The dearth of Levites parallels that of 2.40. 17: Casiphia is unidentified. 21,23: For preparatory fasting see Est.4.16; 2 Chr.20.3; Jer.36.9. 28: Only holy persons should handle holy things. 29: The chambers were the temple store-houses (10.6; Neh.10.37; 13.4-7).

house of the LORD." ³⁰ So the priests and the Levites took over the weight of the silver and the gold and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem, to the house of our God.

³¹ Then we departed from the river Aha'va on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem; the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way. ³² We came to Jerusalem, and there we remained three days. ³³ On the fourth day, within the house of our God, the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed into the hands of Mer'emoth the priest, son of Uri'ah, and with him was Elea'zar the son of Phin'ehas, and with them were the Levites, Jo'zabad the son of Jeshua and No-adi'ah the son of Bin'nui. ³⁴ The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded.

³⁵ At that time those who had come from captivity, the returned exiles, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and as a sin offering twelve he-goats; all this was a burnt offering to the LORD. ³⁶ They also delivered the king's commissions to the king's satraps and to the governors of the province Beyond the River; and they aided the people and the house of God.

¶ After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the Jeb'usites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and

the Amorites. ² For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost."

³ When I heard this, I rent my garments and my mantle, and pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat appalled. ⁴ Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered round me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice. ⁵ And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garments and my mantle rent, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, ⁶ saying:

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. ⁷ From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt; and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as at this day. ⁸ But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant, and to give us a secure hold¹ within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. ⁹ For we are bondmen; yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God,

¹ Heb nail or tent-pin

9.1-15: The problem of mixed marriages. The older codes had not specially discouraged inter-marriages, but experience during the exile, which had developed the principle of exclusiveness, made this contamination of the *holy race* a major problem for those who returned under Zerubbabel (4.3; 6.21), under Nehemiah (Neh.10.28-30; 13.3,23-30), and now under Ezra, who found priests, Levites, and chief officials involved therein. **1.** This list of peoples is only a formula (Dt.7.1; Neh.13.23). **2:** *Holy race*, because as dedicated to God they were separated (Ex.19.5,6; Is.62.12).

9.5-15: Ezra's confession. **7:** *As at this day*, for they were still subject to Persia (v. 9). **8:** *Remnant*, see vv. 13-15; Zech.8.12; Is.28.5. **9:** *Kings*, i.e. Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes.

to repair its ruins, and to give us protection^m in Judea and Jerusalem.

10 "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken thy commandments, ¹¹ which thou didst command by thy servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness.

¹² Therefore give not your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.' ¹³ And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that thou, our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserved and hast given us such a remnant as this, ¹⁴ shall we break thy commandments again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations? Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou wouldst consume us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? ¹⁵ O LORD the God of Israel, thou art just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as at this day. Behold, we are before thee in our guilt, for none can stand before thee because of this."

10 While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel; for the people wept bitterly. ² And Shecani'ah the son of Jehi'el, of the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra: "We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even

now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. ³ Therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. ⁴ Arise, for it is your task, and we are with you; be strong and do it." ⁵ Then Ezra arose and made the leading priests and Levites and all Israel take oath that they would do as had been said. So they took the oath.

6 Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God, and went to the chamber of Jehoha'nán the son of Eli'ashib, where he spent the night,ⁿ neither eating bread nor drinking water; for he was mourning over the faithlessness of the exiles. ⁷ And a proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the returned exiles that they should assemble at Jerusalem, ⁸ and that if any one did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all his property should be forfeited, and he himself banned from the congregation of the exiles.

9 Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within the three days; it was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. And all the people sat in the open square before the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of the heavy rain. ¹⁰ And Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. ¹¹ Now then make confession to the LORD the God of your fathers, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples

^m Heb a wall

ⁿ 1 Esdras 9.2: Heb where he went

11-12: No such passage occurs in extant prophetic writings, but see Lev.18.24-30 and Dt.7.3.

10.1-43: Repentance of the people and divorce of gentile wives. 2: No extant law required divorce in such cases, so *Shechaniah* proposes a way out, a *hope* by a *covenant*, suggesting by the words he uses for *married* and *foreign women* that these had not been true marriages. 3: The law would be that of Dt.7.3. 4: It is your task, for the covenant oath must be administered by Ezra. 6: *Jehohanan* was grandson of *Eliashib* the high priest, and became himself high priest under *Darius II*. 9: Heavy rain is usual in *Chislev*, the ninth month (November-December); so

of the land and from the foreign wives."

¹² Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, "It is so; we must do as you have said. ¹³ But the people are many, and it is a time of heavy rain; we cannot stand in the open. Nor is this a work for one day or for two; for we have greatly transgressed in this matter. ¹⁴ Let our officials stand for the whole assembly; let all in our cities who have taken foreign wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders and judges of every city, till the fierce wrath of our God over this matter be averted from us." ¹⁵ Only Jonathan the son of As'ahel and Jahzei'ah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshul'lam and Shab'bethai the Levite supported them.

¹⁶ Then the returned exiles did so. Ezra the priest selected men,^o heads of fathers' houses, according to their fathers' houses, each of them designated by name. On the first day of the tenth month they sat down to examine the matter; ¹⁷ and by the first day of the first month they had come to the end of all the men who had married foreign women.

¹⁸ Of the sons of the priests who had married foreign women were found Ma-asei'ah, Elie'zer, Jarib, and Gedali'ah, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak and his brethren. ¹⁹ They pledged themselves to put away their wives, and their guilt offering was a ram of the flock for their guilt. ²⁰ Of the sons of Immer: Hana'ni and Zebadi'ah. ²¹ Of the sons of Harim: Ma-asei'ah, Eli'jah, Shemai'ah, Jehi'el, and Uzzi'ah. ²² Of the sons of Pashhur: Eli-o-e'nai, Ma-asei'ah, Ish'mael, Nethan'el, Jo'zabad, and Ela'sah.

²³ Of the Levites: Jo'zabad, Shim'e-i, Kelai'ah (that is, Keli'ta), Petha-hi'ah, Judah, and Elie'zer.

²⁴ Of the singers: Eli'ashib. Of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

²⁵ And of Israel: of the sons of Parosh: Rami'ah, Izzi'ah, Malchi'jah, Mi'jamin, Elea'zar, Hashabi'ah,^p and Benai'ah. ²⁶ Of the sons of Elam: Mattani'ah, Zechari'ah, Jehi'el, Abdi, Jer'emoth, and Eli'jah. ²⁷ Of the sons of Zattu: Eli-o-e'nai, Eli'ashib, Mattani'ah, Jer'emoth, Zabad, and Azi'za. ²⁸ Of the sons of Be'bai were Jehoha'nan, Hanani'ah, Zab'bai, and Ath'lai. ²⁹ Of the sons of Bani were Meshul'lam, Malluch, Adai'ah, Jashub, She'al, and Jer'emoth. ³⁰ Of the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab: Adna, Chelal, Benai'ah, Ma-asei'ah, Mattani'ah, Bez'alel, Bin'nui, and Manas'seh. ³¹ Of the sons of Harim: Elie'zer, Isshi'jah, Malchi'jah, Shemai'ah, Shim'e-on,

³² Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemari'ah. ³³ Of the sons of Hashum: Matte'nai, Mat'tattah, Zabad, Eliph'elet, Jer'emai, Manas'seh, and Shim'e-i. ³⁴ Of the sons of Bani: Ma-ada'i, Amram, Uel, ³⁵ Benai'ah, Bedei'ah, Chel'uhai, ³⁶ Vani'ah, Mer'emoth, Eli'ashib, ³⁷ Mattani'ah, Matte'nai, Ja'asu.

³⁸ Of the sons of Bin'nui:^q Shim'e-i, ³⁹ Shelemi'ah, Nathan, Adai'ah, ⁴⁰ Machnad'ebai, Shashai, Sha'rai, ⁴¹ Az'arel, Shelemi'ah, Shemari'ah, ⁴² Shallum, Amari'ah, and Joseph.

⁴³ Of the sons of Nebo: Je-i'el, Mattithi'ah, Zabad, Zebi'na, Jaddai, Jo'el, and Benai'ah. ⁴⁴ All these had married foreign women, and they put them away with their children."

^o 1 Esdras 9.16: Syr: Heb and there were selected Ezra, etc.

^p 1 Esdras 9.26: Gk: Heb Malchijah

^q Gk: Heb Bani, Binnui

^r 1 Esdras 9.36: Heb obscure

the assembly asks for local enforcement of the covenant. **16-17:** The work commenced in Tebet (the tenth month, December-January) and was completed in Nisan (the first month, March-April). **18-43:** Lists, which were probably derived from official archives. **19:** The guilt offering signified that the wrong had been righted.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

Since the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are really one book, prepared as a supplement to 1 and 2 Chronicles, and since parts of Nehemiah are apparently misplaced and belong in Ezra, problems of origin, structure, and historical background are discussed in the Introduction to Ezra. It is sufficient to say here that the book which we call Nehemiah relates the return of Nehemiah for two periods of governorship over Judah during the reign of Artaxerxes I (426–424 B.C.). The first return was in 445/444. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and instituted social and religious reforms. An outstanding aspect of Nehemiah's religious life was his dependence on God and his frequent prayers to him (1.4–10; 2.18; 4.4,20; 5.9,19; 6.14; 13.14,31).

THE WORDS OF NEHEMI'AH THE son of Hacali'ah.

Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the capital, ² that Hana'ni, one of my brethren, came with certain men out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that survived, who had escaped exile, and concerning Jerusalem. ³ And they said to me, "The survivors there in the province who escaped exile are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire."

4 When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days; and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. ⁵ And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments; ⁶ let thy ear be attentive, and thy eyes open, to hear the prayer of thy servant which I now pray before thee day and night for the people of Israel thy servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Yea, I and my father's house have sinned. ⁷ We have acted very corruptly against thee, and have not

kept the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances which thou didst command thy servant Moses. ⁸ Remember the word which thou didst command thy servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; ⁹ but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your dispersed be under the farthest skies, I will gather them thence and bring them to the place which I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' ¹⁰ They are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power and by thy strong hand. ¹¹ O Lord, let thy ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants who delight to fear thy name; and give success to thy servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

Now I was cupbearer to the king.

2 In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. ² And the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing else but sadness of the heart." Then I was very

1.1–7.5: Nehemiah's memoirs. 1.1–11: Report from Jerusalem and Nehemiah's prayer. Nehemiah was a palace servant of Artaxerxes I at Susa in Elam, winter residence of the Persian kings (Est.1.2,5; Dan.8.2). 1.1: Chislev, November–December. Twentieth year must mean nineteenth, compare 2.1. 2: The men out of Judah seem to have been visitors to the capital. 4: Mourned, compare 9.3–5; Ezr.10.6. 6: He makes confession for the people just as Ezra does. 8–9: There is no such passage in our Pentateuch, but see Dt.30.1–5. The place is Jerusalem. 11: As this man means Artaxerxes, this verse probably belongs after 2.4. Cupbearer, i.e. butler, who sampled and poured wine for the king, an honorable and privileged office.

2.1–20: Nehemiah's mission. Artaxerxes' twentieth year was 445–444 B.C. 5: Sepulchres was

much afraid. ³ I said to the king, "Let the king live for ever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lies waste, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" ⁴ Then the king said to me, "For what do you make request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵ And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may rebuild it." ⁶ And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. ⁷ And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah; ⁸ and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house which I shall occupy." And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

⁹ Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. ¹⁰ But when Sanbal'lat the Hor'onite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard this, it displeased them greatly that some one had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

¹¹ So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. ¹² Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; and I

told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no beast with me but the beast on which I rode. ¹³ I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Jackal's Well and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which had been destroyed by fire. ¹⁴ Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool; but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. ¹⁵ Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall; and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. ¹⁶ And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest that were to do the work.

¹⁷ Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace." ¹⁸ And I told them of the hand of my God which had been upon me for good, and also of the words which the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. ¹⁹ But when Sanbal'lat the Hor'onite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they derided us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" ²⁰ Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build; but you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

a polite understatement, for his plan was to restore the walls, (vv. 8,12-15). **6:** *Queen*, the word perhaps here means only "harem woman." **8:** *Fortress*, see 7.2; 1 Macc.13.52; Acts 21.37. **10:** As local leaders had hindered the work under Zerubbabel (Ezra 4.3-24), so they try again. *Sanballat* is mentioned in the Elephantine papyri as governor of Samaria. Tobiah was apparently an Ammonite official in Persian service. **12-16:** A secret inspection of the walls on foot by night, making a complete circuit of the walls, beginning and ending at the *Valley Gate*. **19:** His enemies suspect the building of the wall was a prelude to rebellion. *Geshem* (6.6) was king of Kedar. **20:** Non-Jews have no *portion*, i.e. property, no *right*, i.e. authority, no *memorial*, i.e. remembrance in the community.

3 Then Eli'ashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors; they consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hanan'el. ² And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them^a Zaccur the son of Imri built.

3 And the sons of Hassena'ah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. ⁴ And next to them Mer'emoth the son of Uri'ah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshul'lam the son of Berechi'ah, son of Meshez'abel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Ba'ana repaired. ⁵ And next to them the Teko'ites repaired; but their nobles did not put their necks to the work of their Lord.^b

6 And Joi'ada the son of Pase'ah and Meshul'lam the son of Besodei'ah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. ⁷ And next to them repaired Melati'ah the Gib'eonite and Jadon the Mero'nothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, who were under the jurisdiction of the governor of the province Beyond the River. ⁸ Next to them Uz'ziel the son of Harhai'ah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him Hanani'ah, one of the perfumers, repaired; and they restored^c Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. ⁹ Next to them Rephai'ah the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of^d Jerusalem, repaired. ¹⁰ Next to them Jedai'ah the son of Haru'maph repaired opposite his house; and next to him Hattush the son of Hashabnei'ah repaired. ¹¹ Malchi'jah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pa'hathmo'ab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. ¹² Next to him Shallum the son of Hallo'hesh, ruler of half the district of^d Jerusalem, repaired, he and his daughters.

13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zano'ah repaired the Valley Gate; they rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the Dung Gate.

14 Malchi'jah the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of^d Beth-hacche'rem, repaired the Dung Gate; he rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

15 And Shallum the son of Colho'zeh, ruler of the district of^d Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars; and he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king's garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. ¹⁶ After him Nehemi'ah the son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of^d Beth-zur, repaired to a point opposite the sepulchres of David, to the artificial pool, and to the house of the mighty men. ¹⁷ After him the Levites repaired: Rehum the son of Bani; next to him Hashabi'ah, ruler of half the district of^d Kei'lah, repaired for his district. ¹⁸ After him their brethren repaired: Bav'vai the son of Hen'adad, ruler of half the district of^d Kei'lah; ¹⁹ next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the Angle. ²⁰ After him Baruch the son of Zab'bai repaired another section from the Angle to the door of the house of Eli'ashib the high priest. ²¹ After him Mer'emoth the son of Uri'ah, son of Hakkoz repaired another section from the door of the house of Eli'ashib to the end of the house of Eli'ashib. ²² After him the priests, the men of the Plain, repaired. ²³ After them Benjamin and Hasshub repaired opposite their house. After

^a Heb him ^b Or lords ^c Or abandoned
^d Or foreman of half the portion assigned to

3.1-32: Work on the wall. 1: Eliashib (12.22; 13.4) was grandson of that Jeshua who worked with Zerubbabel (12.10), and grandfather of the later high priest Jehohanan. 5: The Tekoites (Am.1.1) were not supported by their upper class families. 15: City of David, the old Jebusite town on the hill (2 Sam.5.6-9). 16: Sepulchres of David, 2 Chr.32.33. The house of the mighty men was the barracks.

them Azari'ah the son of Ma-asei'ah, son of Anani'ah repaired beside his own house. ²⁴ After him Bin'nui the son of Hen'adad repaired another section, from the house of Azari'ah to the Angle ²⁵ and to the corner. Palal the son of Uzai repaired opposite the Angle and the tower projecting from the upper house of the king at the court of the guard. After him Pedai'ah the son of Parosh ²⁶ and the temple servants living^e on Ophel repaired to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower. ²⁷ After him the Teko'ites repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall of Ophel.

²⁸ Above the Horse Gate the priests repaired, each one opposite his own house. ²⁹ After them Zadok the son of Immer repaired opposite his own house. After him Shemai'ah the son of Shecani'ah, the keeper of the East Gate, repaired. ³⁰ After him Hanani'ah the son of Shelemi'ah and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. After him Meshul'lam the son of Berechi'ah repaired opposite his chamber. ³¹ After him Malchi'jah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, opposite the Muster Gate,^f and to the upper chamber of the corner. ³² And between the upper chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants repaired.

4^g Now when Sanbal'lat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he ridiculed the Jews. ² And he said in the presence of his brethren and of the army of Sama'ria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore things? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?" ³ Tobi'ah the Ammonite was by him, and he said,

"Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!" ⁴ Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn back their taunt upon their own heads, and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. ⁵ Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from thy sight; for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.

⁶ So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together to half its height. For the people had a mind to work.

⁷ But when Sanbal'lat and Tobi'ah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ash'dodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry; ⁸ and they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. ⁹ And we prayed to our God, and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

¹⁰ But Judah said, "The strength of the burden-bearers is failing, and there is much rubbish; we are not able to work on the wall." ¹¹ And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come into the midst of them and kill them and stop the work." ¹² When the Jews who lived by them came they said to us ten times, "From all the places where they liveⁱ they will come up against us." ¹³ So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. ¹⁴ And I looked, and arose, and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and

^e Cn: Heb were living ^f Or Hammiphkad Gate

^g Ch 3.33 in Heb ^h Ch 4.1 in Heb

ⁱ Cn: Heb you return

^j Compare Gk Syr: Heb uncertain

4.1-7.5: Troubles for the builders. 4.1-9: Trouble from Sanballat and his associates. **4-5:** Words of ill omen must be countered by words of ill omen. **10-14:** To trouble from without

fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. ¹⁶ From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail; and the leaders stood behind all the house of Judah, ¹⁷ who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were laden in such a way that each with one hand labored on the work and with the other held his weapon. ¹⁸ And each of the builders had his sword girded at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. ¹⁹ And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. ²⁰ In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

21 So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn till the stars came out. ²² I also said to the people at that time, "Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day." ²³ So neither I nor my brethren nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon in his hand.^k

5 Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brethren. ² For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many; let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive." ³ There were also those whosaid, "We are mortgaging our fields,

our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine." ⁴ And there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax upon our fields and our vineyards. ⁵ Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children are as their children; yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved; but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards."

6 I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. ⁷ I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them, ⁸ and said to them, "We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brethren who have been sold to the nations; but you even sell your brethren that they may be sold to us!" They were silent, and could not find a word to say. ⁹ So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? ¹⁰ Moreover I and my brethren and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us leave off this interest. ¹¹ Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the hundredth of money, grain, wine, and oil which you have been exacting of them." ¹² Then they said, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests, and took an oath of them to do as they had promised. ¹³ I also shook out my lap and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from

^k Cn: Heb *each his weapon the water*

was added trouble from within. **16:** By *my servants* he would mean his personal, better armed, bodyguard. **21:** Night work was hardly possible in those days. **5.1-13:** Economic ills. Concentration on the walls had led to economic crisis. **3:** *Mortgaging*, i.e. giving as security. **4:** *The king's tax* was the tribute due to Persia. **7-10:** It was legal to take *interest* from non-Jews but not from fellow Jews (Dt.23.20), so the crime was that Jewish leaders had been taking advantage of their brethren in economic troubles. **11:** The *hundredth* represents one per cent monthly. **13:**

his labor who does not perform this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

14 Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Ar-ta-xerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brethren ate the food allowance of the governor.¹⁵ The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens upon the people, and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.¹⁶ I also held to the work on this wall, and acquired no land; and all my servants were gathered there for the work.¹⁷ Moreover there were at my table a hundred and fifty men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations which were about us.¹⁸ Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; fowls likewise were prepared for me, and every ten days skins of wine in abundance; yet with all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the servitude was heavy upon this people.¹⁹ Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

6 Now when it was reported to Sanbal'lat and Tobi'ah and to Geshem the Arab and to the rest of our enemies that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates),² Sanbal'lat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm.³ And

I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"⁴ And they sent to me four times in this way and I answered them in the same manner.⁵ In the same way Sanbal'lat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand.⁶ In it was written, "It is reported among the nations, and Geshem¹ also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall; and you wish to become their king, according to this report.⁷ And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah.' And now it will be reported to the king according to these words. So now come, and let us take counsel together."⁸ Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind."⁹ For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." But now, O God, strengthen thou my hands.

10 Now when I went into the house of Shemai'ah the son of Delai'ah, son of Mehet'abel, who was shut up, he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple; for they are coming to kill you, at night they are coming to kill you."¹¹ But I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live?^m I will not go in."¹² And I understood, and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobi'ah and Sanbal'lat had hired him.¹³ For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act

¹ Heb Gashmu

^m Or would go into the temple to save his life

Lap refers to that part of the outer garment which served as a pocket. **14-19:** Nehemiah's apology for his twelve years as governor. **15:** Forty shekels, about twenty-five dollars. **6.1-19:** Finishing the wall, in spite of plots. **2:** They try to lure Nehemiah to Ono near Lydda to harm him. **5-7:** Failing this, they try to frighten him by threatening to report him to the king, mentioning prophets because they were known as fomenters of rebellion (Jer.28.1-4). **10:** Shemaiah

in this way and sin, and so they could give me an evil name, in order to taunt me. ¹⁴ Remember Tobî'ah and Sanbal'lat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess No-adi'ah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

¹⁵ So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations round about us were afraidⁿ and fell greatly in their own esteem; for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. ¹⁷ Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobî'ah, and Tobî'ah's letters came to them. ¹⁸ For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecanî'ah the son of Arah: and his son Jehoha'nân had taken the daughter of Meshul'lam the son of Berechî'ah as his wife. ¹⁹ Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence, and reported my words to him. And Tobî'ah sent letters to make me afraid.

⁷ Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers; and the Levites had been appointed, ² I gave my brother Hana'ni and Hanani'ah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many. ³ And I said to them, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they are still standing guard^o let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each to his station and each opposite his own house." ⁴ The city was wide and large, but the

people within it were few and no houses had been built.

⁵ Then God put it into my mind to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it:

⁶ These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile; they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town. ⁷ They came with Zerub'babel, Jeshua, Nehemi'ah, Azari'ah, Raami'ah, Naham'ani, Mor'decai, Bilshan, Mis'pereth, Bigva'i, Nehum, Ba'anah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel: ⁸ the sons of Parosh, two thousand a hundred and seventy-two. ⁹ The sons of Shephati'ah, three hundred and seventy-two. ¹⁰ The sons of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two. ¹¹ The sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Jo'ab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen. ¹² The sons of Elam, a thousand two hundred and fifty-four. ¹³ The sons of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five. ¹⁴ The sons of Zac'cai, seven hundred and sixty. ¹⁵ The sons of Bin'nui, six hundred and forty-eight. ¹⁶ The sons of Be'bai, six hundred and twenty-eight. ¹⁷ The sons of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two. ¹⁸ The sons of Adoni'kam, six hundred and sixty-seven. ¹⁹ The sons of Bigva'i, two thousand and sixty-seven. ²⁰ The sons of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five. ²¹ The sons of Ater, namely of Hezeki'ah, ninety-eight. ²² The sons of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight. ²³ The sons of

n Another reading is *saw* *o* Heb obscure

is the enemy within the camp. That prophets could be *hired* illustrates Zech.13.2-6. **15:** *Elul* was the sixth month (August-September). **7.1-5:** Setting up the guards. **2:** *Hanani*, see 1.2. *The castle* is the fortress (2.8). **3:** *The gates* are to be open from sunrise to sunset. At v. 5a the memoirs of Nehemiah break off to be picked up again after chapter 11. Verse 5b is a transition verse to introduce the genealogies of vv. 6-73a which parallel Ezra 2.1-70.

7.6-73: A census of the first return. See Ezra 2.1-70 n. 73b: A connecting verse based on Ezra 3.1.

Be'zai, three hundred and twenty-four.

²⁴ The sons of Hariph, a hundred and twelve. ²⁵ The sons of Gibeon, ninety-five. ²⁶ The men of Bethlehem and Neto'phah, a hundred and eighty-eight.

²⁷ The men of An'athoth, a hundred and twenty-eight. ²⁸ The men of Bethaz'maveth, forty-two. ²⁹ The men of Kir'iath-je'arim, Chephi'rah, and Be'er'oth, seven hundred and forty-three.

³⁰ The men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one. ³¹ The men of Michmas, a hundred and twenty-two.

³² The men of Bethel and Ai, a hundred and twenty-three. ³³ The men of the other Nebo, fifty-two. ³⁴ The sons of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred and fifty-four. ³⁵ The sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

³⁶ The sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five. ³⁷ The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one.

³⁸ The sons of Sena'ah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

³⁹ The priests: the sons of Jedai'ah, namely the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three. ⁴⁰ The sons of Immer, a thousand and fifty-two.

⁴¹ The sons of Pashhur, a thousand two hundred and forty-seven. ⁴² The sons of Harim, a thousand and seven-teen.

⁴³ The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, namely of Kad'mi-el of the sons of Ho'devah, seventy-four. ⁴⁴ The singers: the sons of Asaph, a hundred and forty-eight. ⁴⁵ The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hati'ta, the sons of Sho'bai, a hundred and thirty-eight.

⁴⁶ The temple servants:^p the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasu'pha, the sons of Tabbao'oth, ⁴⁷ the sons of Keros, the sons of Si'a, the sons of Padon, ⁴⁸ the sons of Leba'na, the sons of Hag'aba, the sons of Shalmi, ⁴⁹ the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, ⁵⁰ the sons of Re-ai'ah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Neko'da, ⁵¹ the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Pase'ah, ⁵² the sons

of Besai, the sons of Me-u'nim, the sons of Nephush'esim, ⁵³ the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Haku'pha, the sons of Harhur, ⁵⁴ the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehi'da, the sons of Harsha, ⁵⁵ the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sis'era, the sons of Temah, ⁵⁶ the sons of Nezi'ah, the sons of Hati'pha.

⁵⁷ The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of So'tai, the sons of So'phereth, the sons of Peri'da, ⁵⁸ the sons of Ja'ala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, ⁵⁹ the sons of Shephati'ah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Po'chereth-hazzeba'im, the sons of Amon.

⁶⁰ All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants were three hundred and ninety-two.

⁶¹ The following were those who came up from Tel-me'lah, Tel-har'sha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not prove their fathers' houses nor their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: ⁶² the sons of Delai'ah, the sons of Tobai'ah, the sons of Neko'da, six hundred and forty-two.

⁶³ Also, of the priests: the sons of Hobai'ah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzil'lai (who had taken a wife of the daughters of Barzil'lai the Gileadite and was called by their name).

⁶⁴ These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean; ⁶⁵ the governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.

⁶⁶ The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, ⁶⁷ besides their menservants and maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five singers, male and female. ⁶⁸ Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five,^q ⁶⁹ their camels four hundred and thirty-five,

^p Heb *nethinin*

^q Ezra 2.66 and the margins of some Hebrew Mss: Heb lacks *their horses . . . forty-five*

and their asses six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

70 Now some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury a thousand darics of gold, fifty basins, five hundred and thirty priests' garments.⁷¹ And some of the heads of fathers' houses gave into the treasury of the work twenty thousand darics of gold and two thousand two hundred minas of silver.⁷² And what the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand darics of gold, two thousand minas of silver, and sixty-seven priests' garments.

73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns.

And when the seventh month had come, the children of Israel were in **8** their towns.¹ And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel.² And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.³ And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.⁴ And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden pulpit which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithi'ah, Shema, Anai'ah, Uri'ah, Hilki'ah, and Ma-asei'ah on his right hand; and Pedai'ah, Mish'a-el, Malchi'jah, Hashum, Hashbad'danah, Zechari'ah, and Meshul'-

lam on his left hand.⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; for he was above all the people; and when he opened it all the people stood.⁶ And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God; and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.⁷ Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebi'ah, Jamin, Akkub, Shab'bethai, Hodi'ah, Ma-asei'ah, Keli'ta, Azari'ah, Jo'zabad, Hanan, Pelai'ah, the Levites,⁸ helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places.⁹ And they read from the book, from the law of God, clearly;⁹ and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

9 And Nehemi'ah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."¹¹ So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved."¹² And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

13 On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came to-

^r 1 Esdras 9.48 Vg: Heb and the Levites
^s Or with interpretation

8.1-9.37: Continuation of the Ezra story. **8.1-12:** Reading the book of the law. **1:** *The Water Gate* is doubtless that of 3.26. For Ezra's *book of law* see Ezra 7.6,10,14. The citations from it in vv. 14,15 (and Ezra 9.11,12) are not in our Pentateuch. **2:** *The seventh month* was Tishri (September-October), the *first day* of which was a day of convocation (Num.29.1). **4:** *Pulpit*, lit. "tower." **7-8:** Since the *book* was in Hebrew, it was interpreted to the people in the more familiar Aramaic. The name *Nehemiah* in v. 9 is a scribal insertion. **10-12:** A feast is appointed to celebrate the event.

gether to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the law. ¹⁴ And they found it written in the law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, ¹⁵ and that they should publish and proclaim in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." ¹⁶ So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of E'phraim. ¹⁷ And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths; for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. ¹⁸ And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the book of the law of God. They kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the ordinance.

9 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth upon their heads. ² And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. ³ And they stood up in their place and read from the book of the law of the LORD their God for a fourth of the day; for another fourth of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God. ⁴ Upon the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kad'mi-el,

Shebani'ah, Bunni, Sherebi'ah, Bani, and Chena'ni; and they cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God. ⁵ Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kad'mi-el, Bani, Hashabnei'ah, Sherebi'ah, Hodi'ah, Shebani'ah, and Pethahi'ah, said, "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be thy glorious name which is exalted above all blessing and praise."

6 And Ezra said: "Thou art the LORD, thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and thou preservest all of them; and the host of heaven worships thee. ⁷ Thou art the LORD, the God who didst choose Abram and bring him forth out of Ur of the Chalde'ans and give him the name Abraham; ⁸ and thou didst find his heart faithful before thee, and didst make with him the covenant to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Per'izzite, the Jeb'usite, and the Gir'gashite; and thou hast fulfilled thy promise, for thou art righteous.

9 "And thou didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and hear their cry at the Red Sea, ¹⁰ and didst perform signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for thou knewest that they acted insolently against our fathers; and thou didst get thee a name, as it is to this day. ¹¹ And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land; and thou didst cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. ¹² By a pillar of cloud

t Gk: Heb lacks and Ezra said

8.13-18: Celebration of the feast of booths. Reading *the law* made them aware that this month of Tishri (September-October) was the time for the feast of *booths*, the Mosaic regulations for which are in Lev.23.33-43. **15:** *The hills* must mean the hilly country around Jerusalem. **16:** *The booths* were apparently both domestic and communal. **17:** *Jeshua the son of Nun* may be meant to refer to that Jeshua who worked with Zerubbabel.

9.1-37: The great confession. **1-5:** The setting. **2:** The confession was something in which non-Jews might not participate. **3:** They *read*, i.e. they listened to the reading. **4:** *The stairs* possibly belonged to the pulpit of 8.4. **6-37:** Ezra's confession and complaint.

thou didst lead them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. ¹³ Thou didst come down upon Mount Sinai, and speak with them from heaven and give them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments, ¹⁴ and thou didst make known to them thy holy sabbath and command them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses thy servant. ¹⁵ Thou didst give them bread from heaven for their hunger and bring forth water for them from the rock for their thirst, and thou didst tell them to go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.

¹⁶ "But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey thy commandments; ¹⁷ they refused to obey, and were not mindful of the wonders which thou didst perform among them; but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their bondage in Egypt. But thou art a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and didst not forsake them. ¹⁸ Even when they had made for themselves a molten calf and said, 'This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,' and had committed great blasphemies, ¹⁹ thou in thy great mercies didst not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud which led them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night which lighted for them the way by which they should go. ²⁰ Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them, and didst not withhold thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. ²¹ Forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell. ²² And thou didst give them kingdoms and peoples, and didst allot to them every

corner; so they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. ²³ Thou didst multiply their descendants as the stars of heaven, and thou didst bring them into the land which thou hadst told their fathers to enter and possess. ²⁴ So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and thou didst subdue before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and didst give them into their hands, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. ²⁵ And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns hewn out, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance; so they ate, and were filled and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

²⁶ "Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against thee and cast thy law behind their back and killed thy prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to thee, and they committed great blasphemies. ²⁷ Therefore thou didst give them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer; and in the time of their suffering they cried to thee and thou didst hear them from heaven; and according to thy great mercies thou didst give them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies. ²⁸ But after they had rest they did evil again before thee, and thou didst abandon them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them; yet when they turned and cried to thee thou didst hear from heaven, and many times thou didst deliver them according to thy mercies. ²⁹ And thou didst warn them in order to turn them back to thy law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey thy commandments, but sinned against thy ordinances, by the observ-

17: Num.14.4 says only that they suggested appointing such a leader. 20a: *Gavest thy good Spirit*, perhaps a reference to the appointment of elders (Num.11.17-29). 27: The *saviors* here are the judges (Jg.2.16). 30: *By thy Spirit*, see Zech.7.12; 2 Chr.24.20.

ance of which a man shall live, and turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.³⁰ Many years thou didst bear with them, and didst warn them by thy Spirit through thy prophets; yet they would not give ear. Therefore thou didst give them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.³¹ Nevertheless in thy great mercies thou didst not make an end of them or forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

32 "Now therefore, our God, the great and mighty and terrible God, who keepest covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to thee that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day.³³ Yet thou hast been just in all that has come upon us, for thou hast dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly;³⁴ our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept thy law or heeded thy commandments and thy warnings which thou didst give them.³⁵ They did not serve thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness which thou gavest them, and in the large and rich land which thou didst set before them; and they did not turn from their wicked works.³⁶ Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that thou gavest to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves.³⁷ And its rich yield goes to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress."

38^a Because of all this we make a firm covenant and write it, and our princes, our Levites, and our priests set their seal to it.

10^v Those who set their seal are Nehemi'ah the governor, the son of Hacali'ah, Zedeki'ah,² Serai'ah, Azari'ah, Jeremiah,³ Pashhur, Amari'ah, Malchi'jah,⁴ Hattush, Shebani'ah, Malluch,⁵ Harim, Mer'emoth, Obadi'ah,⁶ Daniel, Gin'nethon, Baruch,⁷ Meshul'lam, Abi'jah, Mi'jamin,⁸ Ma-azi'ah, Bil'gai, Shemai'ah; these are the priests.⁹ And the Levites: Jeshua the son of Azani'ah, Bin'nui of the sons of Hen'adad, Kad'mi-el;¹⁰ and their brethren, Shebani'ah, Hodi'ah, Keli'ta, Pelai'ah, Hanan,¹¹ Mica, Rehob, Hashabi'ah,¹² Zaccur, Sherebi'ah, Shebani'ah,¹³ Hodi'ah, Bani, Beni'nu.¹⁴ The chiefs of the people: Parosh, Pa'hath-mo'ab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,¹⁵ Bunni, Azgad, Be'bai,¹⁶ Adoni'jah, Bigva'i, Adin,¹⁷ Ater, Hezeki'ah, Azzur,¹⁸ Hodi'ah, Hashum, Be'zai,¹⁹ Hariph, An'athoth, Ne'bai,²⁰ Mag'piash, Meshul'lam, Hezir,²¹ Meshez'abel, Zadok, Jad'du-a,²² Pelati'ah, Hanan, Anai'ah,²³ Hoshe'a, Hanani'ah, Hasshub,²⁴ Hallo'hesh, Pi'lha, Shobek,²⁵ Rehum, Hashab'nah, Ma-asei'ah,²⁶ Ahi'ah, Hanan, Anan,²⁷ Malluch, Harim, Ba'anah.

28 The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding,²⁹ join with their brethren, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his ordinances and his statutes.³⁰ We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons;³¹ and if

^a Ch 10.1 in Heb ^v Ch 10.2 in Heb

9.38-10.39: The covenant to support God's house; a document belonging to the Nehemiah story. **9.38:** *Because of all this* refers to chapter 13. **10.28:** *Separated themselves*, see 9.2; 13.3; and Ezra 6.21. **31:** *Sabbath day*, see 13.15-18. *A holy day* was treated as a sabbath. For the *seventh year* see Ex.23.10, and for the *debt*, Dt.15.1-3. **32:** The temple tax was voluntary;

the peoples of the land bring in wares or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the sabbath or on a holy day; and we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt.

32 We also lay upon ourselves the obligation to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: ³³ for the showbread, the continual cereal offering, the continual burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts, the holy things, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God. ³⁴ We have likewise cast lots, the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law. ³⁵ We obligate ourselves to bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the LORD; ³⁶ also to bring to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God, the first-born of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks; ³⁷ and to bring the first of our coarse meal, and our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the wine and the oil, to the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our ground, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our rural towns. ³⁸ And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes; and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers, to the storehouse. ³⁹ For the people of Israel

and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers. We will not neglect the house of our God.

||| Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem; and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem the holy city, while nine tenths remained in the other towns. ² And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.

3 These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but in the towns of Judah every one lived on his property in their towns: Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's servants. ⁴ And in Jerusalem lived certain of the sons of Judah and of the sons of Benjamin. Of the sons of Judah: Athai'ah the son of Uzzi'ah, son of Zechari'ah, son of Amari'ah, son of Shephati'ah, son of Mahal'alel, of the sons of Perez; ⁵ and Ma-asei'ah the son of Baruch, son of Col-ho'zeh, son of Hazai'ah, son of Adai'ah, son of Joi'arib, son of Zechari'ah, son of the Shi'lonite. ⁶ All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were four hundred and sixty-eight valiant men.

7 And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshul'lam, son of Jo'ed, son of Pedai'ah, son of Kolai'ah, son of Ma-asei'ah, son of I'thi-el, son of Jeshai'ah. ⁸ And after him Gabba'i, Salla'i, nine hundred and twenty-eight. ⁹ Jo'el the son of Zichri was their overseer; and Judah the son of Hassen'u-ah was second over the city.

10 Of the priests: Jedai'ah the son of Joi'arib, Jachin, ¹¹ Serai'ah the son of Hilki'ah, son of Meshul'lam, son of

later it became an obligatory half-shekel tax (Ex.30.13; Mt.17.24). ³⁴: Casting lots was a recognized procedure (11.1; 1 Chr.25.8; 1 Sam.14.40-45; Acts 1.23-26). *The wood offering* was for the altar fires (13.31; Lev.6.12). ³⁵⁻³⁶: The law on *first fruits*, Ex.22.29; 23.19; Num.18.15-18. ³⁷: *Tithes*, see Lev.27.30; Num.18.25-32. *The chambers* were the temple store-rooms (13.13; Ezra 8.29; 10.6).

11.1-13.31: Continuation of Nehemiah's memoirs, picking up from 7.5a. 11.1-36: A census

Zadok, son of Merai'oth, son of Ahi'tub, ruler of the house of God,¹² and their brethren who did the work of the house, eight hundred and twenty-two; and Adai'ah the son of Jero'ham, son of Pelali'ah, son of Amzi, son of Zechari'ah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchi'jah,¹³ and his brethren, heads of fathers' houses, two hundred and forty-two; and Amash'sai, the son of Az'arel, son of Ah'zai, son of Meshil'lemoth, son of Immer,¹⁴ and their brethren, mighty men of valor, a hundred and twenty-eight; their overseer was Zab'diel the son of Haggeldolim.

15 And of the Levites: Shemai'ah the son of Hasshub, son of Azri'kam, son of Hashabi'ah, son of Bunni;¹⁶ and Shab'bethai and Jo'zabad, of the chiefs of the Levites, who were over the outside work of the house of God;¹⁷ and Mattani'ah the son of Mica, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, who was the leader to begin the thanksgiving in prayer, and Bakbuki'ah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the son of Sham'mua, son of Galal, son of Jedu'thun.¹⁸ All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred and eighty-four.

19 The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their brethren, who kept watch at the gates, were a hundred and seventy-two.²⁰ And the rest of Israel, and of the priests and the Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, every one in his inheritance.²¹ But the temple servants lived on Ophel; and Ziha and Gishpa were over the temple servants.

22 The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, son of Hashabi'ah, son of Mattani'ah, son of Mica, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, over the work of the house of God.²³ For there was a command from the king concerning them, and a settled provision for the singers, as

every day required.²⁴ And Pethahi'ah the son of Meshez'abel, of the sons of Zerah the son of Judah; was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

25 And as for the villages, with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kir'iath-ar'ba and its villages, and in Dibon and its villages, and in Jekab'zeel and its villages,²⁶ and in Jeshua and in Mola'dah and Beth-pelet,²⁷ in Ha'zar-shu'al, in Beer-sheba and its villages,²⁸ in Ziklag, in Meco'nah and its villages,²⁹ in En-rim'mon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth,³⁰ Zano'ah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish and its fields, and Aze'kah and its villages. So they encamped from Beer-sheba to the valley of Hinnom.³¹ The people of Benjamin also lived from Geba onward, at Michmash, Ai'ja, Bethel and its villages,³² An'athoth, Nob, Anani'ah,³³ Hazor, Ramah, Git'taim,³⁴ Hadid, Zeb'o'im, Nebal'lat,³⁵ Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.³⁶ And certain divisions of the Levites in Judah were joined to Benjamin.

12 These are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jeshua: Serai'ah, Jeremiah, Ezra,² Amari'ah, Malluch, Hattush,³ Shecani'ah, Rehum, Mer'emoth,⁴ Iddo, Gin'nethoi, Abi'jah,⁵ Mi'jamin, Madi'ah, Bilgah,⁶ Shemai'ah, Joi'arib, Jedai'ah,⁷ Sallu, Amok, Hilki'ah, Jedai'ah. These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua.

8 And the Levites: Jeshua, Bin'nui, Kad'mi-el, Sherebi'ah, Judah, and Mattani'ah, who with his brethren was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving.⁹ And Bakbuki'ah and Unno their brethren stood opposite them in the service.¹⁰ And Jeshua was the father of Joi'akim, Joi'akim the father of Eli'ashib, Eli'ashib the

list. 9,14,22: There was an overseer over each group. 24: *At the king's hand*, i.e. he was one of the Persian monarch's famous "eyes" reporting on Judean affairs. 25-36: Census of the village distribution. 12.1-26: An appendix to the census lists, see Ezra 2.36-40. Verses 9 and 24 suggest

father of Joi'ada, ¹¹ Joi'ada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jad'du-a.

12 And in the days of Joi'akim were priests, heads of fathers' houses: of Serai'ah, Merai'ah; of Jeremiah, Hanani'ah; ¹³ of Ezra, Meshul'lam; of Amari'ah, Jehoha'nan; ¹⁴ of Mal'luchi, Jonathan; of Shebani'ah, Joseph; ¹⁵ of Harim, Adna; of Merai'oth, Hel'kai; ¹⁶ of Iddo, Zechari'ah; of Gin'nethon, Meshul'lam; ¹⁷ of Abi-jah, Zichri; of Mini'amin, of Moadi'ah, Pil'tai; ¹⁸ of Bilgah, Sham'mu-a; of Shemai'ah, Jehon'athan; ¹⁹ of Joi'arib, Matte'nai; of Jedai'ah, Uzzi; ²⁰ of Sal'lai, Kal'lai; of Amok, Eber; ²¹ of Hilki'ah, Hashabi'ah; of Jedai'ah, Nethan'el.

22 As for the Levites, in the days of Eli'ashib, Joi'ada, Joha'nan, and Jad'du-a, there were recorded the heads of fathers' houses; also the priests until the reign of Darius the Persian. ²³ The sons of Levi, heads of fathers' houses, were written in the Book of the Chronicles until the days of Joha'nan the son of Eli'ashib. ²⁴ And the chiefs of the Levites: Hashabi'ah, Sherebi'ah, and Jeshua the son of Kad'mi-el, with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, watch corresponding to watch. ²⁵ Mattani'ah, Bakkuki'ah, Obadi'ah, Meshul'lam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses of the gates.

²⁶ These were in the days of Joi'akim the son of Jeshua son of Jo'zadak, and in the days of Nehemi'ah the governor and of Ezra the priest the scribe.

27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanks-

givings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. ²⁸ And the sons of the singers gathered together from the circuit round Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netoph'athites; ²⁹ also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Az'maveth; for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem. ³⁰ And the priests and the Levites purified themselves; and they purified the people and the gates and the wall.

31 Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies which gave thanks and went in procession. One went to the right upon the wall to the Dung Gate; ³² and after them went Hoshai'ah and half of the princes of Judah, ³³ and Azari'ah, Ezra, Meshul'lam, ³⁴ Judah, Benjamin, Shemai'ah, and Jeremiah, ³⁵ and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets: Zechari'ah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemai'ah, son of Mattani'ah, son of Micai'ah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph; ³⁶ and his kinsmen, Shemai'ah, Az'arel, Mil'alai, Gil'alai, Ma'ai, Nethan'el, Judah, and Hana'ni, with the musical instruments of David the man of God; and Ezra the scribe went before them. ³⁷ At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.

38 The other company of those who gave thanks went to the left, and I followed them with half of the people, upon the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, ³⁹ and above the Gate of E'phraim, and by the Old Gate, and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hanan'el and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a halt at the

antiphonal singing. 23: This does not necessarily mean our book of Chronicles. 26: The phrase *Ezra the priest the scribe* is an editorial insertion.

12.27-43: The dedication of the walls, with music, purification, procession, and sacrifice. 28: Men from Netophath, southwest of Jerusalem (1 Chr.9.16; Ezra 2.22). 31: Two companies, for they marched in opposite directions and met at the temple. 36: They used the same kinds of instruments which tradition said belonged to David's time. The reference to Ezra here and in

Gate of the Guard. ⁴⁰ So both companies of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; ⁴¹ and the priests Eli'akim, Ma-asei'ah, Mini'amin, Micai'ah, Eli-o-e'nai, Zechari'ah, and Hanani'ah, with trumpets; ⁴² and Ma-asei'ah, Shemai'ah, Elea'zar, Uzzi, Jehoha'nan, Malchi'jah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with Jezrahi'ah as their leader. ⁴³ And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

⁴⁴ On that day men were appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the first fruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. ⁴⁵ And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. ⁴⁶ For in the days of David and Asaph of old there was a chief of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. ⁴⁷ And all Israel in the days of Zerub'babel and in the days of Nehemi'ah gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron.

13 On that day they read from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and in it was found written

that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God; ² for they did not meet the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them—yet our God turned the curse into a blessing. ³ When the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent.

⁴ Now before this, Eli'ashib the priest, who was appointed over the chambers of the house of our God, and who was connected with Tob'i'ah, ⁵ prepared for Tob'i'ah a large chamber where they had previously put the cereal offering, the frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain, wine, and oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, and the contributions for the priests. ⁶ While this was taking place I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Ar-ta-xer-x'es king of Babylon I went to the king. And after some time I asked leave of the king ⁷ and came to Jerusalem, and I then discovered the evil that Eli'ashib had done for Tob'i'ah, preparing for him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. ⁸ And I was very angry, and I threw all the household furniture of Tob'i'ah out of the chamber. ⁹ Then I gave orders and they cleansed the chambers; and I brought back thither the vessels of the house of God, with the cereal offering and the frankincense.

¹⁰ I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them; so that the Levites and the singers, who did the work, had fled each to his field. ¹¹ So I remonstrated with the officials and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gath-

v. 33 is an editorial insertion. **43:** *Great sacrifices*, see Ezra 6.17. **44-47:** *Arrangements for temple revenues*. **45:** See 2 Chr.8.14, referring back to 1 Chr. chs. 23-26.

13.1-30: *Nehemiah's second administration*. Verses 1-3 are introductory to connect with 8.18. **1:** *Written*, compare Dt.23.3-5. **2:** *Balaam*, see Num. chs. 22-24. **4-9:** The ejection of Tobiah an Ammonite (2.10). **4:** *Eliashib* is the high priest of 3.1,20; 12.22; Ezra 10.6, and who was connected by marriage with Sanballat (v. 28); in defiance of the law against Ammonites (v. 1), he had allotted Tobiah a temple chamber. **6:** Artaxerxes' *thirty-second year*, 433 B.C. (5.14); as he died in 423 the *some time* falls between those two years. **9:** That he *gave orders* proves that his return was with royal authority. **10-14:** Restoration of tithes to the temple staff.

ered them together and set them in their stations. ¹² Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. ¹³ And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses Shelemi'ah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedai'ah of the Levites, and as their assistant Hanan the son of Zaccur, son of Mattani'ah, for they were counted faithful; and their duty was to distribute to their brethren. ¹⁴ Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service.

¹⁵ In those days I saw in Judah men treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on asses; and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; and I warned them on the day when they sold food. ¹⁶ Men of Tyre also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of wares and sold them on the sabbath to the people of Judah, and in Jerusalem. ¹⁷ Then I remonstrated with the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this evil thing which you are doing, profaning the sabbath day? ¹⁸ Did not your fathers act in this way, and did not our God bring all this evil on us and on this city? Yet you bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath."

¹⁹ When it began to be dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and gave orders that they should not be opened until after the sabbath. And I set some of my servants over the gates, that no burden might be brought in on the sabbath day. ²⁰ Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. ²¹ But I warned them and said to them, "Why do you lodge before the wall? If you

do so again I will lay hands on you." From that time on they did not come on the sabbath. ²² And I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and come and guard the gates, to keep the sabbath day holy. Remember this also in my favor, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of thy steadfast love.

²³ In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; ²⁴ and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but the language of each people. ²⁵ And I contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them take oath in the name of God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. ²⁶ Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless foreign women made even him to sin. ²⁷ Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?"

²⁸ And one of the sons of Jehoi'ada, the son of Eli'ashib the high priest, was the son-in-law of Sanbal'lat the Hor'onite; therefore I chased him from me. ²⁹ Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

³⁰ Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; ³¹ and I provided for the wood offering, at appointed times, and for the first fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

14: *Wipe not out*, see 4.5. **15-22:** Instances of sabbath breaking. **19-20:** Shutting the gates prevented produce from entering the city, a restriction which merchants sought to nullify by trading *outside* the walls. **23-30:** The problem of mixed marriages (10.30; Ezra 9.1-2; 10.2). **25:** Such physical violence is common in Oriental history. **26:** *Solomon*, 1 Kg 11.1-8.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

In the Hebrew Bible, Esther comes last of the five rolls (*megillōth*) which are read at the great festivals of the Jewish year. It is the roll for Purim, a secular feast celebrating deliverance from a subtly planned anti-Semitic pogrom. Its reception into Scripture was long disputed by the Rabbis, for it contains no reference to the most precious things in Jewish religion and does not even mention the name of God. In the Greek Bible, it has its place among the historical books, and has been lengthened by the addition of passages intended to make it a more religious book. Our English Bible includes these, "The Additions to the Book of Esther," among the Apocrypha.

Some have thought the book was written in Maccabean times to celebrate Jewish triumph over the Seleucids (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 15), but it is probably earlier and seems to have been written as propaganda for the observance in Palestine of a festival, brought home by Jews from the Dispersion, which they called Purim and celebrated on the 14th or 15th of Adar (in February–March). It is not history, but a legend, set back early in the Persian period, intended to explain the origin and significance of Purim. Though embellished with numerous fictional devices, it may well rest on an historical account of some local deliverance of the Jews in Persia, for there is external evidence of a certain Marduka holding an official post at Susa under Xerxes I.

IN THE DAYS OF AHASU-E'RUS, THE Ahasu-e'rus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, ² in those days when King Ahasu-e'rus sat on his royal throne in Susa the capital, ³ in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his princes and servants, the army chiefs^a of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces being before him, ⁴ while he showed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor and pomp of his majesty for many days, a hundred and eighty days. ⁵ And when these days were completed, the king gave for all the people present in Susa the capital, both great and small, a banquet lasting for seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. ⁶ There were white cotton curtains and blue hangings caught up with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings^b and marble pillars, and also couches of

gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones. ⁷ Drinks were served in golden goblets, goblets of different kinds, and the royal wine was lavished according to the bounty of the king. ⁸ And drinking was according to the law, no one was compelled; for the king had given orders to all the officials of his palace to do as every man desired. ⁹ Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the palace which belonged to King Ahasu-e'rus.

¹⁰ On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehu'man, Biztha, Harbo'na, Bigtha and Abag'tha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served King Ahasu-e'rus as chamberlains, ¹¹ to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown, in order to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to

a Heb the army *b* Or rods

1.1–9: Ahasuerus' feast. *Ahasuerus* (Ezra 4.6; Dan.9.1) is Xerxes I (485–464 B.C.), whose Persian empire, from *India*, i.e. the Indus valley, to *Ethiopia*, the modern Nubia, included some twenty satrapies (Herodotus, *Hist.* III, 89), subdivided into *provinces*. **2:** Persepolis was his capital; Susa, a citadel (*capital*) in Elam, was his winter residence. **3:** Greek writers mention fabulous feasts given by Persian kings. **5:** Excavations at *Susa* have uncovered such a *court*. **9:** *Vashti* is an Elamitish name, perhaps of a royal concubine, for Xerxes' *queen* was Amestris, a Persian (Herodotus, *Hist.* VII, 61).

1.10–2.4: Vashti's fall. The names here, as elsewhere in this book, are attempts to reproduce Persian names. **11:** *Crown* indicates that she was to appear in royal attire. **13:** *Wise men*, prob-

behold. ¹² But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command conveyed by the eunuchs. At this the king was enraged, and his anger burned within him.

¹³ Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times—for this was the king's procedure toward all who were versed in law and judgment, ¹⁴ the men next to him being Carshe'na, Shethar, Adma'tha, Tarshish, Meres, Marse'na, and Memu'can, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom—: ¹⁵ “According to the law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti, because she has not performed the command of King Ahasu-e'rus conveyed by the eunuchs?” ¹⁶ Then Memu'can said in presence of the king and the princes, “Not only to the king has Queen Vashti done wrong, but also to all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasu-e'rus. ¹⁷ For this deed of the queen will be made known to all women, causing them to look with contempt upon their husbands, since they will say, ‘King Ahasu-e'rus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, and she did not come.’ ¹⁸ This very day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's behavior will be telling it to all the king's princes, and there will be contempt and wrath in plenty. ¹⁹ If it please the king, let a royal order go forth from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be altered, that Vashti is to come no more before King Ahasu-e'rus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.

²⁰ So when the decree made by the king is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, vast as it is, all women will give honor to their husbands, high and low.” ²¹ This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memu'can proposed; ²² he sent letters to all the royal provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, that every man be lord in his own house and speak according to the language of his people.

2 After these things, when the anger of King Ahasu-e'rus had abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. ² Then the king's servants who attended him said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king. ³ And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem in Susa the capital, under custody of Hegai the king's eunuch who is in charge of the women; let their ointments be given them. ⁴ And let the maiden who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This pleased the king, and he did so.

⁵ Now there was a Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mor'decai, the son of Ja'ir, son of Shim'e-i, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, ⁶ who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. ⁷ He had brought up Hadas'sah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother; the maiden was beautiful and lovely, and when her father and her

ably his seven privy counselors (Ezra 7.14; Herodotus, *Hist.* III, 31.84). **19:** This belief in the immutability of Medo-Persian law appears in 8.8; Dan.6.8. **22:** Aramaic was normally used for such official correspondence; so here, as in 3.12 and 8.9, there is rhetorical exaggeration. **2.2:** *Servants*, i.e. his pages, not his counselors. **3.9:** *Harem*, lit. “house of women”; *ointments* means cosmetics.

2.5-23: Mordecai and Esther. They were cousins with names derived from the deities Marduk and Ishtar, who also were cousins. That, like Saul, he was a Benjaminite, is emphasized to prepare readers for the enmity of Haman, an Amalekite of the Agag family, Saul's enemy (see 3.1-15 n.). **6:** *Jeconiah* is Jehoiachin (2 Kg.24.6); so Mordecai was about one hundred and twenty years old. **7:** He was her foster-father (Is.49.23). **10:** Esther's concealment of her race

mother died, Mor'decai adopted her as his own daughter. ⁸ So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many maidens were gathered in Susa the capital in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai who had charge of the women. ⁹ And the maiden pleased him and won his favor; and he quickly provided her with her ointments and her portion of food, and with seven chosen maids from the king's palace, and advanced her and her maids to the best place in the harem. ¹⁰ Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mor'decai had charged her not to make it known. ¹¹ And every day Mor'decai walked in front of the court of the harem, to learn how Esther was and how she fared.

¹² Now when the turn came for each maiden to go in to King Ahasu-e'rus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women—¹³ when the maiden went in to the king in this way she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. ¹⁴ In the evening she went, and in the morning she came back to the second harem in custody of Shash'gaz the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines; she did not go in to the king again, unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

¹⁵ When the turn came for Esther the daughter of Ab'hail the uncle of Mor'decai, who had adopted her as his own daughter, to go in to the king,

she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her. ¹⁶ And when Esther was taken to King Ahasu-e'rus into his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign, ¹⁷ the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸ Then the king gave a great banquet to all his princes and servants; it was Esther's banquet. He also granted a remission of taxes^c to the provinces, and gave gifts with royal liberality.

¹⁹ When the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mor'decai was sitting at the king's gate. ²⁰ Now Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mor'decai had charged her; for Esther obeyed Mor'decai just as when she was brought up by him. ²¹ And in those days, as Mor'decai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasu-e'rus. ²² And this came to the knowledge of Mor'decai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mor'decai. ²³ When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the Book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king.

3 After these things King Ahasu-e'rus promoted Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammeda'tha, and ad-

^c Or a holiday

is a necessary literary device (v. 20). **11:** Mordecai's closeness to the *harem* suggests that he was a minor official, perhaps a eunuch gatekeeper (vv. 19,21; 6.10). **12:** *Their beautifying*, apparently by massage. **16:** *Tebeth* (December-January), as all the month-names in this book, is a Babylonian name. **18:** This *banquet* being a wedding feast, the king favors his subjects with largesse. **21:** *The threshold*, that of the bed-chamber. Xerxes actually fell victim to such a conspiracy of bed-chamber servants, as have other Oriental potentates. **23:** *On the gallows*, lit. "on a tree," i.e. impalement, the normal form of punishment in Persia for political offenders. *Chronicles*, such records kept by court scribes in Persia are mentioned by Greek writers.

3.1-15: *Haman and Mordecai*. For the Benjaminite-Agagite enmity see 1 Sam.15.7-9.

vanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. ² And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and did obeisance to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mor'decai did not bow down or do obeisance. ³ Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mor'decai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" ⁴ And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mor'decai's words would avail; for he had told them that he was a Jew. ⁵ And when Haman saw that Mor'decai did not bow down or do obeisance to him, Haman was filled with fury. ⁶ But he disdained to lay hands on Mor'decai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mor'decai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mor'decai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasu-e'rus.

⁷ In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasu-e'rus, they cast Pur, that is the lot, before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. ⁸ Then Haman said to King Ahasu-e'rus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not for the king's profit to tolerate them. ⁹ If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of

silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries." ¹⁰ So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammeda'tha, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you."

¹² Then the king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the princes of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language; it was written in the name of King Ahasu-e'rus and sealed with the king's ring. ¹³ Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. ¹⁴ A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. ¹⁵ The couriers went in haste by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the capital. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Susa was perplexed.

⁴ When Mor'decai learned all that had been done, Mor'decai rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry;

Haman was advanced to be grand vizier, to whom lower officials must make obeisance, an honor which Mordecai as a Benjaminites would not pay an Agagite (see 2.5-23 n.; 9.16 n.). **6:** Haman's indignation naturally suggested a pogrom of *all the Jews*. **7:** *Pur* is an Akkadian word for lot, and casting lots was not irreligious (1 Sam.14.42; Acts 1.26; Herodotus, *Hist.* III, 128). The lot was to decide an appropriate date for the pogrom. **9:** To clinch his argument Haman offers a bribe of about \$18,000,000. **10:** *His ring* was his signet ring which gave validity to documents (8.2,8; Gen.41.42). **11:** The king refuses the bribe but authorizes the pogrom. **13:** The *couriers* carrying the *edict* were the famous post service organized by Cyrus. The apocryphal Additions to the Book of Esther give the text of the documents. **14:** The *copy* was the local public distribution of the *edict*.

4.1-17: The appeal to Esther. **1:** These are traditional Oriental manifestations of grief and

² he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. ³ And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mor'decai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. ⁵ Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mor'decai to learn what this was and why it was. ⁶ Hathach went out to Mor'decai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, ⁷ and Mor'decai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ Mor'decai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. ⁹ And Hathach went and told Esther what Mor'decai had said. ¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mor'decai, saying, ¹¹ "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law; all alike are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the

golden scepter that he may live. And I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days." ¹² And they told Mor'decai what Esther had said. ¹³ Then Mor'decai told them to return answer to Esther, "Think not that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" ¹⁵ Then Esther told them to reply to Mor'decai, ¹⁶ "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." ¹⁷ Mor'decai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

5 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, opposite the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne inside the palace opposite the entrance to the palace; ² and when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his sight and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter. ³ And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom." ⁴ And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come this day to a dinner that I have prepared for the king." ⁵ Then said the king,

mourning, which render one ritually unclean, so Mordecai (v. 2) could not *enter the king's gate*. **11**: Interdiction to enter without being summoned was a security precaution. **14**: *From another quarter* probably refers to Divine providence. The apocryphal Additions to the Book of Esther insert here the prayers of Esther and Mordecai.

5.1-8: Esther before the king. **1**: By appearing unbidden she had violated custom; so she stood at the inner court to await the monarch's reaction. **3,6**: *The half of my kingdom* (7.2) is a customary hyperbole (compare Mk.6.23). **4,8**: No subtle reason need be sought for the first and second *dinner*, nor for Haman's being the only guest; these are but literary embellishments needful to the story.

"Bring Haman quickly, that we may do as Esther desires." So the king and Haman came to the dinner that Esther had prepared. ⁶ And as they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." ⁷ But Esther said, "My petition and my request is: ⁸ If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow^d to the dinner which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

⁹ And Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart. But when Haman saw Mor'decai in the king's gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mor'decai. ¹⁰ Nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends and his wife Zeresh. ¹¹ And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and the servants of the king. ¹² And Haman added, "Even Queen Esther let no one come with the king to the banquet she prepared but myself. And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king. ¹³ Yet all this does me no good, so long as I see Mor'decai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." ¹⁴ Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the

king to have Mor'decai hanged upon it; then go merrily with the king to the dinner." This counsel pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

⁶ On that night the king could not sleep; and he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. ² And it was found written how Mor'decai had told about Big-thana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands upon King Ahasu-e'rus. ³ And the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mor'decai for this?" The king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him." ⁴ And the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mor'decai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him. ⁵ So the king's servants told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in." ⁶ So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" ⁷ and Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, ⁸ let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set; ⁹ and let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes; let him^e array the man

^d Gk: Heb lacks tomorrow ^e Heb them

5.9-14: Haman's exaltation and chagrin. **10:** Haman's boasting before *his friends* is characteristically Oriental. They are the *wise men* of 6.13. **14:** *Gallows*, see 2.23 n. The *fifty cubits*, i.e. eighty-three feet, is hyperbole for literary effect. Haman could prepare this, but only the monarch could condemn men.

6.1-14: Mordecai's triumph. The sleeplessness of kings is a common motif in Oriental tales. It and the numerous coincidences which here accumulate are literary devices. **3:** Herodotus (*Hist.* VIII, 85,90) records how Persian monarchs kept records of notable services rendered. **4:** The inquiry, *Who is in the court?* merely means, What official is currently in attendance? Haman's eagerness drove him to early attendance, and his superior rank gave him precedence. **8:** The bestowal of *robes* of honor was common in ancient times (Gen.41.42; 1 Sam.18.4), and is still practiced. The *royal crown* here was an ornament for the horse, such as is pictured on

whom the king delights to honor, and let him^e conduct the man on horseback through the open square of the city, proclaiming before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'¹⁰ Then the king said to Haman, "Make haste, take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to Mor'decai the Jew who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."¹¹ So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he arrayed Mor'decai and made him ride through the open square of the city, proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."

¹² Then Mor'decai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.¹³ And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had befallen him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mor'decai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

¹⁴ While they were yet talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and brought Haman in haste to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

7 So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther.² And on the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."³ Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and

if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request."⁴ For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king."⁵ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, that would presume to do this?"⁶ And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was in terror before the king and the queen.⁷ And the king rose from the feast in wrath and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.⁸ And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was; and the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face.⁹ Then said Harbo'na, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, "Moreover, the gallows which Haman has prepared for Mor'decai, whose word saved the king, is standing in Haman's house, fifty cubits high."¹⁰ And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mor'decai. Then the anger of the king abated.

8 On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of
e Heb them

monuments. **12:** *Mourning*, i.e. weeping with chagrin. To cover the head was a sign of grief (2 Sam.15.30; Jer.14.4). **14:** It was an Oriental custom for guests to be brought to an entertainment (Lk.14.17).

7.1-10: Haman's fall. **4:** *We are (have been) sold* is a reference to Haman's bribe. Had Haman planned to sell the Jews into slavery to enrich the royal treasury, Esther would not have intervened; but planned destruction changes the situation. **6:** *Enemy* is used to recall the ancient enmity of Agag and the Amalekites (see 3.1-15 n.). **8:** *Falling* as a suppliant at someone's feet was a common custom (8.3; 1 Sam.25.23,24; 2 Kg.4.27; Mk.7.25). That they covered the face of one doomed indicates a Greco-Roman custom rather than Persian. **9:** It was inevitable that some servant would think of this "poetic justice."

8.1-17: The rise of Mordecai and the revocation of the edict. **1:** Herodotus (*Hist.* III, 129)

Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mor'decai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her; ² and the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mor'decai. And Esther set Mor'decai over the house of Haman.

³ Then Esther spoke again to the king; she fell at his feet and besought him with tears to avert the evil design of Haman the Ag'agite and the plot which he had devised against the Jews.

⁴ And the king held out the golden scepter to Esther, ⁵ and Esther rose and stood before the king. And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammeda'tha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king.

⁶ For how can I endure to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" ⁷ Then King Ahasu-e'rus said to Queen Esther and to Mor'decai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he would lay hands on the Jews. ⁸ And you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring; for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked."

⁹ The king's secretaries were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and an edict was written according to all that Mor'decai

commanded concerning the Jews to the satraps and the governors and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language. ¹⁰ The writing was in the name of King Ahasu-e'rus and sealed with the king's ring, and letters were sent by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud. ¹¹ By these the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, with their children and women, and to plunder their goods, ¹² upon one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasu-e'rus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. ¹³ A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, and by proclamation to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to avenge themselves upon their enemies. ¹⁴ So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out in haste, urged by the king's command; and the decree was issued in Susa the capital.

¹⁵ Then Mor'decai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a mantle of fine linen and purple, while the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. ¹⁶ The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. ¹⁷ And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and

mentions the property of criminals being confiscated. The transference of the signet ring indicates promotion of Mordecai as grand vizier. **5:** Esther subtly suggests that the edict was not really his but *devised by Haman*. **8:** The king rejects this subterfuge, accepts the responsibility, but neutralizes the edict by new instructions. **10:** Greek writers mention the *horses* of the Persian postal system. **12:** The date is carefully given, for it is important for the Purim festival. After v. 12 the apocryphal Additions to the Book of Esther insert the text of the king's letter. **15:** Mordecai appears in his state robes, *crown* here being the viziral turban. **17:** *A feast and a holiday* contrast with the fasting and lamentation of 4.3. The improbability of many Persians becoming proselytes leads some to translate the verb as "joined themselves to," i.e. took the part of the Jews (9.27).

his edict came, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them.

9 Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to get the mastery over them, but which had been changed to a day when the Jews should get the mastery over their foes, ² the Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on such as sought their hurt. And no one could make a stand against them, for the fear of them had fallen upon all peoples. ³ All the princes of the provinces and the satraps and the governors and the royal officials also helped the Jews, for the fear of Mor'decai had fallen upon them. ⁴ For Mor'decai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mor'decai grew more and more powerful. ⁵ So the Jews smote all their enemies with the sword, slaughtering, and destroying them, and did as they pleased to those who hated them. ⁶ In Susa the capital itself the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men, ⁷ and also slew Par-shan-da'tha and Dalphon and Aspa'tha ⁸ and Pora'tha and Ada'lia and Arida'tha ⁹ and Parmash'ta and Ar'isai and Ar'idai and Vaiza'tha, ¹⁰ the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammeda'tha, the enemy of the Jews; but they laid no hand on the plunder.

11 That very day the number of those slain in Susa the capital was re-

ported to the king. ¹² And the king said to Queen Esther, "In Susa the capital the Jews have slain five hundred men and also the ten sons of Haman. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what further is your request? It shall be fulfilled." ¹³ And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the Jews who are in Susa be allowed tomorrow also to do according to this day's edict. And let the ten sons of Haman be hanged on the gallows." ¹⁴ So the king commanded this to be done; a decree was issued in Susa, and the ten sons of Haman were hanged. ¹⁵ The Jews who were in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they slew three hundred men in Susa; but they laid no hands on the plunder.

16 Now the other Jews who were in the king's provinces also gathered to defend their lives, and got relief from their enemies, and slew seventy-five thousand of those who hated them; but they laid no hands on the plunder. ¹⁷ This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made that a day of feasting and gladness. ¹⁸ But the Jews who were in Susa gathered on the thirteenth day and on the fourteenth, and rested on the fifteenth day, making that a day of feasting and gladness. ¹⁹ Therefore the Jews of the villages, who live in the open towns, hold the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day for gladness and feasting and holiday-making, and a day on which they send choice portions to one another.

20 And Mor'decai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews

9.1-32: Destruction of the enemies and inauguration of the feast of Purim. 1: The important date is again given (compare 8.12). 3-5: *The royal officials*, anxious to please the new vizier, helped the Jews. 7: The names of Haman's sons, represented as Persian names, are written peculiarly in the Hebrew text, favoring cryptic interpretations. 15: The second day's slaughter is probably a device to explain why the city Jews had a two-day Purim celebration but the country Jews only one. 16: The emphasis here, as in vv. 10,15, that the Jews did not plunder seems a reminder of the Agag story, where they plundered to their own hurt (1 Sam.15.9). 19,22: *Choice portions*, i.e. dainties, gifts of food-stuffs (Neh.8.10). 20-32: The official institu-

who were in all the provinces of King Ahasu-e'rus, both near and far, ²¹ enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year, ²² as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending choice portions to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 So the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mor'decai had written to them. ²⁴ For Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammada'tha, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to crush and destroy them; ²⁵ but when Esther came before the king, he gave orders in writing that his wicked plot which he had devised against the Jews should come upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. ²⁶ Therefore they called these days Purim, after the term Pur. And therefore, because of all that was written in this letter, and of what they had faced in this matter, and of what had befallen them, ²⁷ the Jews ordained and took it upon themselves and their descendants and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to what was written and at the time appointed every year, ²⁸ that these days should be re-

membered and kept throughout every generation, in every family, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Ab'ihail, and Mor'decai the Jew gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim. ³⁰ Letters were sent to all the Jews, to the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasu-e'rus, in words of peace and truth, ³¹ that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons, as Mor'decai the Jew and Queen Esther enjoined upon the Jews, and as they had laid down for themselves and for their descendants, with regard to their fasts and their lamenting. ³² The command of Queen Esther fixed these practices of Purim, and it was recorded in writing.

10 King Ahasu-e'rus laid tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea. ² And all the acts of his power and might, and the full account of the high honor of Mor'decai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? ³ For Mor'decai the Jew was next in rank to King Ahasu-e'rus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brethren, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people.

tion of Purim (an addition to the book from a different source). Mordecai as vizier takes the initiative; Esther with queenly authority confirms the arrangements, so Mordecai writes to the Jewish communities and Esther follows with a letter. This emphasis on the *written* word is doubtless intended to legalize a festival not mentioned in the Torah.

10.1-3: Conclusion. A paragraph on the continued greatness of Xerxes and fame of Mordecai. After 10.3 the apocryphal Additions to the Book of Esther append Mordecai's soliloquy.

THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of Job does not attempt to explain the mystery of suffering or to "justify the ways of God with men." It aims at probing the depths of faith in spite of suffering. The ancient folktale of a patient Job (1.1–2.13; 42.7–17; Jas. 5.11) circulated orally among oriental sages in the second millennium B.C. and was probably written down in Hebrew at the time of David and Solomon or a century later (about 1000–800 B.C.). An anonymous poet of the sixth or fifth century B.C. used it as a setting for the discussion between an impatient Job and his three friends (3.1–31.40) and the Lord's discourses from the whirlwind (38.1–42.6). A later poet contributed Elihu's speeches (32.1–37.24).

The storyteller asked, "Does [man] fear God for nought?" (1.9). The poet echoed the question, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit do we get if we pray to him?" (21.15). Unlike the hero of the folktale who is rewarded materially for his virtues, the Job of the poem demands justice, and his final challenge shows that he regards religion and morality as man's claim for happiness (29.1–31.40). Job renounces his defiance only after the Lord asks, "Will you condemn me that you may be justified?" (40.8). Job is satisfied without self-vindication by an experience of immediate communion with God, not unlike that of the great prophets: "Now my eye sees thee" (42.5).

In the poetic language of the book, God is at work in the universe, even "to bring rain on a land where no man is" (38.26), and he is aware of evil (personified by the monsters Behemoth and Leviathan, 40.15–41.34). At the same time, he cares for Job so fully that he reveals himself personally to him and shares with him the vision of his cosmic responsibilities. A God who confesses his burdens to man is a God who is profoundly involved in the destiny of man. He is not an impassive force. In the presence of holiness and creative love, virtuous man surrenders his pride in adoration. In his own way the poet conveyed a view of sin which transcends morality, the awareness of which is possible only in the context of faith.

THERE WAS A MAN IN THE LAND OF UZ, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil. ² There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³ He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and very many servants; so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. ⁴ His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each on his day; and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them

all; for Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan^a also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "Whence have you come?" Satan answered the LORD, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." ⁸ And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nought?" ¹⁰ Hast thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all

^a Heb *the adversary*

1.1–2.13: The prologue. A blameless man is deprived of wealth, posterity, and health, but keeps his faith in God. **1:** *The land of Uz* is probably Edom, although some locate it in north Transjordan. The name *Job* may mean "hostile" or "penitent." *Blameless*, i.e. healthy, whole, and socially responsible. **6–8:** *Satan* (see note ^a; Zech.3.1 n.) is *among the sons of God*. He is not yet the demonic personification of later Judaism (compare 1 Chr.21.1) and Christianity.

that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

¹¹ But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse thee to thy face." ¹² And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself do not put forth your hand." So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; ¹⁴ and there came a messenger to Job, and said, "The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them; ¹⁵ and the Sabe'ans fell upon them and took them, and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you."

¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, "The Chalde'ans formed three companies, and made a raid upon the camels and took them, and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness, and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you."

²⁰ Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell

upon the ground, and worshiped.

²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Q Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "Whence have you come?" Satan answered the LORD, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." ³ And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause." ⁴ Then Satan answered the LORD, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵ But put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." ⁶ And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power; only spare his life."

⁷ So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD, and afflicted Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. ⁸ And he took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes.

⁹ Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God, and die." ¹⁰ But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall

15: *Sabeans*, nomads from Arabia. 17: *Chaldeans*, originally from southern Mesopotamia. The folk-teller respects archaic and local color. 21: *Naked shall I return*, Hebrew adds "there," suggesting correspondence between *mother's womb* and "mother earth." Although a foreigner, Job uses the covenant-name, Yahweh (the LORD); this is an indication of early date. In the poem, the sacred name Yahweh is never used by the speakers (except in 12.9, a proverbial quotation). 22: The Deity is not accused of capricious malevolence. 2.4: *Skin for skin*, a hide for a hide, a proverb probably used by tradesmen. 7: *Loathsome sores*, not necessarily leprosy (Hansen's disease) but a skin ailment, one of many in the Near East. 9: *Curse God, and die*, Job's wife still believed in his integrity (see 4.6 n.) but wished to shorten his torture. 10: *Foolish*

we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eli'phaz the Te'manite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Na'amathite. They made an appointment together to come to condole with him and comfort him. ¹² And when they saw him from afar, they did not recognize him; and they raised their voices and wept; and they rent their robes and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. ¹³ And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

3 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

² And Job said:

³ "Let the day perish wherein I was born,
and the night which said,
'A man-child is conceived.'

⁴ Let that day be darkness!
May God above not seek it,
nor light shine upon it.

⁵ Let gloom and deep darkness claim it.
Let clouds dwell upon it;
let the blackness of the day
terrify it.

⁶ That night—let thick darkness seize it!
let it not rejoice among the days
of the year,
let it not come into the number of
the months.

⁷ Yea, let that night be barren;
let no joyful cry be heard^b in it.

⁸ Let those curse it who curse the day,
who are skilled to rouse up
Leviathan.

⁹ Let the stars of its dawn be dark;

let it hope for light, but have none,
nor see the eyelids of the morning;
¹⁰ because it did not shut the doors of
my mother's womb,
nor hide trouble from my eyes.

¹¹ "Why did I not die at birth,
come forth from the womb and
expire?

¹² Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should
suck?

¹³ For then I should have lain down
and been quiet;
I should have slept; then I should
have been at rest,

¹⁴ with kings and counselors of the
earth
who rebuilt ruins for themselves,
¹⁵ or with princes who had gold,
who filled their houses with silver.

¹⁶ Or why was I not as a hidden
untimely birth,
as infants that never see the light?

¹⁷ There the wicked cease from
troubling,
and there the weary are at rest.

¹⁸ There the prisoners are at ease
together;
they hear not the voice of the
taskmaster.

¹⁹ The small and the great are there,
and the slave is free from his
master.

²⁰ "Why is light given to him that is in
misery,

and life to the bitter in soul,
²¹ who long for death, but it comes not,
and dig for it more than for hid
treasures;

²² who rejoice exceedingly,
and are glad, when they find the
grave?

²³ Why is light given to a man whose
way is hid,

^b Heb come

women, i.e. those who do not believe in divine intervention into human affairs (see Ps.14.1 n.).
11: The friends of Job came from northwest Arabia.

3.1-26: Job's soliloquy. 8: Those who are skilled to rouse Leviathan are magicians, astrologers, and calendar-makers who were believed to produce as well as announce eclipses. *Leviathan*, the sea monster (7.12), like Rahab (9.13; 26.12; Is.51.9), threatens to engulf the created order and the succession of days and nights, especially during eclipses of the sun or moon. **14: Ruins**,

whom God has hedged in?
 24 For my sighing comes as^c my bread,
 and my groanings are poured out
 like water.
 25 For the thing that I fear comes upon
 me,
 and what I dread befalls me.
 26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
 I have no rest; but trouble comes.”

4 Then Eli'phaz the Te'manite answered:

2 “If one ventures a word with you,
 will you be offended?
 Yet who can keep from speaking?
 3 Behold, you have instructed many,
 and you have strengthened the
 weak hands.
 4 Your words have upheld him who
 was stumbling,
 and you have made firm the feeble
 knees.
 5 But now it has come to you, and you
 are impatient;
 it touches you, and you are
 dismayed.
 6 Is not your fear of God your
 confidence,
 and the integrity of your ways
 your hope?
 7 “Think now, who that was innocent
 ever perished?
 Or where were the upright cut
 off?
 8 As I have seen, those who plow
 iniquity
 and sow trouble reap the same.
 9 By the breath of God they perish,
 and by the blast of his anger they
 are consumed.
 10 The roar of the lion, the voice of the
 fierce lion,

the teeth of the young lions, are
 broken.
 11 The strong lion perishes for lack of
 prey,
 and the whelps of the lioness are
 scattered.
 12 “Now a word was brought to me
 stealthily,
 my ear received the whisper of it.
 13 Amid thoughts from visions of the
 night,
 when deep sleep falls on men,
 14 dread came upon me, and
 trembling,
 which made all my bones shake.
 15 A spirit glided past my face;
 the hair of my flesh stood up.
 16 It stood still,
 but I could not discern its
 appearance.
 A form was before my eyes;
 there was silence, then I heard a
 voice:
 17 ‘Can mortal man be righteous
 before^d God?
 Can a man be pure before^d his
 Maker?
 18 Even in his servants he puts no trust,
 and his angels he charges with
 error;
 19 how much more those who dwell in
 houses of clay,
 whose foundation is in the dust,
 who are crushed before the moth.
 20 Between morning and evening they
 are destroyed;
 they perish for ever without any
 regarding it.
 21 If their tent-cord is plucked up
 within them,

c Heb before d Or more than

probably pyramids. The thought of a happy afterlife is not Hebraic but Egyptian. 23: *God*, Hebrew Eloah, a name which stresses the terrible aspect of the Deity, whose omnipotence is never doubted by Job. Job's dilemma is directly related to his theological view that God is the cause of both good and evil (disaster, calamities, etc.); see 2.10; Is.45.7; Am.3.6.

4.1-5.27: **First discourse of Eliphaz.** 1-4: The opening words are courteous. The poet insists on the sincerity of Job's comforters. 6: Job's *integrity* (Hebrew word related to “blameless” in 1.1; see 2.9 n.) is not yet questioned. 7: The dogma of individual, this-worldly retribution is upheld. 12-16: Eliphaz appeals to a supranatural, almost prophetic, source of authority. He does not speak in the name of tradition or experience, as wise men generally do. 17: Surely no mortal man is *righteous before God*, and Job should adopt an attitude of humility instead of rebelling against the divine will. 21: The word translated *tent-cord* has two separate meanings;

do they not die, and that without wisdom?

- 5 "Call now; is there any one who will answer you?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 Surely vexation kills the fool, and jealousy slays the simple.
3 I have seen the fool taking root, but suddenly I cursed his dwelling.
4 His sons are far from safety, they are crushed in the gate, and there is no one to deliver them.
5 His harvest the hungry eat, and he takes it even out of thorns;^e and the thirsty^f pant after his^g wealth.
6 For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground;
7 but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.
8 "As for me, I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause;
9 who does great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number:
10 he gives rain upon the earth and sends waters upon the fields;
11 he sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.
12 He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success.
13 He takes the wise in their own craftiness; and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end.
14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,

and grope at noonday as in the night.

- 15 But he saves the fatherless from their mouth,^h the needy from the hand of the mighty.
16 So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts her mouth.
17 "Behold, happy is the man whom God reproves; therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty.
18 For he wounds, but he binds up; he smites, but his hands heal.
19 He will deliver you from six troubles; in seven there shall no evil touch you.
20 In famine he will redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword.
21 You shall be hid from the scourge of the tongue, and shall not fear destruction when it comes.
22 At destruction and famine you shall laugh, and shall not fear the beasts of the earth.
23 For you shall be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.
24 You shall know that your tent is safe, and you shall inspect your fold and miss nothing.
25 You shall know also that your descendants shall be many, and your offspring as the grass of the earth.

^e Heb obscure

^f Aquila Symmachus Syr Vg: Heb *snare*

^g Heb *their*

^h Cn: Heb uncertain

here it should be translated "pre-eminence" or "excellency"; men's pre-eminence or excellency is of no avail. They have only an illusion of *wisdom*. 5:1: *The holy ones*, divine beings; members of the heavenly court cannot be intercessors. Eliphaz suspects, perhaps, that in a case like that of Job, polytheism offers some ground for a false argument of justification. 8: *I would*, that is, were I in Job's place; if Job would only turn from his arrogance, his present misery would be ended. 17-27: Suffering must be accepted as *the chastening of the Almighty*. The poet refers to the doctrine of *musar* (chastening or correction), which is characteristic of Jewish orthodoxy.

²⁶ You shall come to your grave in ripe old age,
as a shock of grain comes up to the threshing floor in its season.
²⁷ Lo, this we have searched out; it is true.
Hear, and know it for your good.”ⁱ

6 Then Job answered:
² “O that my vexation were weighed,
and all my calamity laid in the balances!
³ For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea;
therefore my words have been rash.
⁴ For the arrows of the Almighty are in me;
my spirit drinks their poison;
the terrors of God are arrayed against me.
⁵ Does the wild ass bray when he has grass,
or the ox low over his fodder?
⁶ Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt,
or is there any taste in the slime of the purslane?^j
⁷ My appetite refuses to touch them;
they are as food that is loathsome to me.^k
⁸ “O that I might have my request,
and that God would grant my desire;
⁹ that it would please God to crush me,
that he would let loose his hand and cut me off!
¹⁰ This would be my consolation;
I would even exult^l in pain unsparing;

for I have not denied the words of the Holy One.
¹¹ What is my strength, that I should wait?
And what is my end, that I should be patient?
¹² Is my strength the strength of stones,
or is my flesh bronze?
¹³ In truth I have no help in me,
and any resource is driven from me.
¹⁴ “He who withholds^m kindness from a friend
forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
¹⁵ My brethren are treacherous as a torrent-bed,
as freshets that pass away,
¹⁶ which are dark with ice,
and where the snow hides itself.
¹⁷ In time of heat they disappear;
when it is hot, they vanish from their place.
¹⁸ The caravans turn aside from their course;
they go up into the waste, and perish.
¹⁹ The caravans of Tema look,
the travelers of Sheba hope.
²⁰ They are disappointed because they were confident;
they come thither and are confounded.
²¹ Such you have now become to me;”
you see my calamity, and are afraid.
²² Have I said, ‘Make me a gift’?
Or, ‘From your wealth offer a bribe for me’?

ⁱ Heb for yourself

^j The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^k Heb obscure

^l The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^m Syr Vg Compare Tg: Heb obscure

ⁿ Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb obscure

6.1-7.21: Reply of Job. The orthodox explanation cannot be valid in Job's case, for his calamity exceeds all ordinary misfortunes. **6:** *Slime of the purslane*, an insipid and repulsive food. Purslane is a potherb. **8-11:** The Egyptian theme of desire for an early death reappears (see ch. 3). Moreover Job fears that, if his days (and hence, his tortures) are prolonged, he may deny the words of the Holy One (v. 10). The poet suggests thereby the complexity of the hero's personality; Job is an unwilling blasphemer. **14:** The test of true religion lies in human compassion for others. Another rendering is: “A man should show kindness to a man in despair, even to one who forsakes the fear of the Almighty.” Some commentators suggest that the verse is a marginal note made by a scribe. **15-20:** Friendship fails precisely when it is needed. **24:** Job is

²³ Or, 'Deliver me from the adversary's hand'?

Or, 'Ransom me from the hand of oppressors'?

²⁴ "Teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand how I have erred.

²⁵ How forceful are honest words! But what does reproof from you reprove?

²⁶ Do you think that you can reprove words, when the speech of a despairing man is wind?

²⁷ You would even cast lots over the fatherless, and bargain over your friend.

²⁸ "But now, be pleased to look at me; for I will not lie to your face.

²⁹ Turn, I pray, let no wrong be done. Turn now, my vindication is at stake.

³⁰ Is there any wrong on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern calamity?

7 "Has not man a hard service upon earth, and are not his days like the days of a hireling?

² Like a slave who longs for the shadow, and like a hireling who looks for his wages,

³ so I am allotted months of emptiness, and nights of misery are apportioned to me.

⁴ When I lie down I say, 'When shall I arise?'

But the night is long, and I am full of tossing till the dawn.

⁵ My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt; my skin hardens, then breaks out afresh.

⁶ My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and come to their end without hope.

⁷ "Remember that my life is a breath; my eye will never again see good.

⁸ The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more; while thy eyes are upon me, I shall be gone.

⁹ As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up;

¹⁰ he returns no more to his house, nor does his place know him any more.

¹¹ "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

¹² Am I the sea, or a sea monster, that thou testest a guard over me?

¹³ When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,'

¹⁴ then thou dost scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions,

¹⁵ so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones.

¹⁶ I loathe my life; I would not live for ever.

Let me alone, for my days are a breath.

willing to admit that he has *erred*, if only convincing evidence is brought forward. **30:** His conscience, however, is able to *discern* the right of his case. **7.1-6:** The life of mortal man in general is comparable to that of a *slave who longs for the shadow*; moreover, its transient nature is the source of new anguish. **7-21:** A prayer. It is at the moment of despair that man begins to pray. **7-9:** *Remember that my life is a breath.* Job appeals to divine compassion with the implied mockery that God will act when it will be too late. Job has heard of foreign speculations on the descent of men and gods to the underworld, only to deny any return from there. **12:** *Am I the sea, or a sea monster?* A return to the theme of the personification of evil (see 3.8 n.) in a context of sarcastic humor. Job compares himself in jest to the primeval forces which in Semitic polytheism threaten the security of the inhabited earth. His pain and his destitution are likened to the watch or *guard* which Marduk posted around the conquered dragon in the Babylonian

- 17 What is man, that thou dost make so much of him,
and that thou dost set thy mind upon him,
18 dost visit him every morning,
and test him every moment?
19 How long wilt thou not look away from me,
nor let me alone till I swallow my spittle?
20 If I sin, what do I do to thee, thou watcher of men?
Why hast thou made me thy mark?
Why have I become a burden to thee?
21 Why dost thou not pardon my transgression
and take away my iniquity?
For now I shall lie in the earth;
thou wilt seek me, but I shall not be."

- 8 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:
2 "How long will you say these things,
and the words of your mouth be a great wind?
3 Does God pervert justice?
Or does the Almighty pervert the right?
4 If your children have sinned against him,
he has delivered them into the power of their transgression.
5 If you will seek God
and make supplication to the Almighty,
6 if you are pure and upright,
surely then he will rouse himself for you

- and reward you with a rightful habitation.
7 And though your beginning was small,
your latter days will be very great.
8 "For inquire, I pray you, of bygone ages,
and consider what the fathers have found;
9 for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing,
for our days on earth are a shadow.
10 Will they not teach you, and tell you,
and utter words out of their understanding?
11 "Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh?
Can reeds flourish where there is no water?
12 While yet in flower and not cut down,
they wither before any other plant.
13 Such are the paths of all who forget God;
the hope of the godless man shall perish.
14 His confidence breaks in sunder,
and his trust is a spider's web.^o
15 He leans against his house, but it does not stand;
he lays hold of it, but it does not endure.
16 He thrives before the sun,
and his shoots spread over his garden.
17 His roots twine about the stone-heap;
he lives among the rocks.^p

^o Heb house ^p Gk Vg: Heb uncertain

poem on creation. 17-18: A parody of Ps. 8. While the psalmist praised the creator who assigns to insignificant and mortal man a place of pre-eminence in nature, Job ironically prefers to receive minimal attention (see also Ps. 144.3-4). 20: Human sin cannot justify God's hostility to man. 21: *Thou wilt seek me*, i.e. thou wilt grope in the darkness after me, *but I shall not be*. Job threatens the Almighty with his own non-being! He at once reaffirms his former trust in a loving God and sarcastically implies the frustration of that love.

8.1-22: **First discourse of Bildad.** The second friend dispenses with oriental etiquette. 3-4: In order to uphold the dogma of divine justice, he implies that Job suffers for the sin of his children, whose transgression has the power to destroy the collective personality of the clan to which they belonged. 5-7: In a flagrant disregard of logic, Bildad advises the sufferer to *make supplication*, literally, "to implore grace," and immediately proceeds to defend a moralistic view of salvation as a reward for purity and uprightness (see vv. 11-22). His sources of authority are proverbs gathered from *bygone ages* (v. 8; see vv. 11, 20, 22).

¹⁸ If he is destroyed from his place,
then it will deny him, saying, 'I
have never seen you.'

¹⁹ Behold, this is the joy of his way;
and out of the earth others will
spring.

²⁰ "Behold, God will not reject a
blameless man,
nor take the hand of evildoers.

²¹ He will yet fill your mouth with
laughter,
and your lips with shouting.

²² Those who hate you will be clothed
with shame,
and the tent of the wicked will be
no more."

9 Then Job answered:

² "Truly I know that it is so:
but how can a man be just before
God?

³ If one wished to contend with him,
one could not answer him once in
a thousand times.

⁴ He is wise in heart, and mighty in
strength
—who has hardened himself against
him, and succeeded?—

⁵ he who removes mountains, and
they know it not,
when he overturns them in his
anger;

⁶ who shakes the earth out of its place,
and its pillars tremble;

⁷ who commands the sun, and it does
not rise;
who seals up the stars;

⁸ who alone stretched out the heavens,
and trampled the waves of the
sea;^q

⁹ who made the Bear and Orion,
the Pleiades and the chambers of
the south;

¹⁰ who does great things beyond
understanding,
and marvelous things without
number.

¹¹ Lo, he passes by me, and I see him
not;
he moves on, but I do not perceive
him.

¹² Behold, he snatches away; who can
hinder him?
Who will say to him, 'What doest
thou'?

¹³ "God will not turn back his anger;
beneath him bowed the helpers of
Rahab.

¹⁴ How then can I answer him,
choosing my words with him?

¹⁵ Though I am innocent, I cannot
answer him;
I must appeal for mercy to my
accuser.^r

¹⁶ If I summoned him and he answered
me,
I would not believe that he was
listening to my voice.

¹⁷ For he crushes me with a tempest,
and multiplies my wounds without
cause;

¹⁸ he will not let me get my breath,
but fills me with bitterness.

¹⁹ If it is a contest of strength, behold
him!
If it is a matter of justice, who can
summon him?^s

²⁰ Though I am innocent, my own
mouth would condemn me;
though I am blameless, he would
prove me perverse.

²¹ I am blameless; I regard not myself;
I loathe my life.

²² It is all one; therefore I say,
he destroys both the blameless and
the wicked.

²³ When disaster brings sudden death,
he mocks at the calamity^t of the
innocent.

²⁴ The earth is given into the hand of
the wicked;

^q Or trampled the back of the sea dragon

^r Or for my right

^s Compare Gk: Heb me. The text of the verse is
uncertain

^t The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

9.1-10.22: Reply of Job. Following the principle of delayed reaction, Job replies not to Bildad, who has just spoken, but to Eliphaz (compare 9.2 with 4.17). **9.3-29:** In a contest of strength the Creator has the advantage. There is no human or divine judge of God (who is implicitly compared to a thief or kidnapper; v. 12), a thought which anticipates the theme of the mediator (see vv. 33-35). **23:** God is compared to an irresponsible person who *mocks*.

he covers the faces of its judges—
if it is not he, who then is it?

²⁵ “My days are swifter than a runner;
they flee away, they see no good.

²⁶ They go by like skiffs of reed,
like an eagle swooping on the
prey.

²⁷ If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my sad countenance,
and be of good cheer,’

²⁸ I become afraid of all my suffering,
for I know thou wilt not hold me
innocent.

²⁹ I shall be condemned;
why then do I labor in vain?

³⁰ If I wash myself with snow,
and cleanse my hands with lye,

³¹ yet thou wilt plunge me into a pit,
and my own clothes will abhor
me.

³² For he is not a man, as I am, that I
might answer him,
that we should come to trial
together.

³³ There is no^u umpire between us,
who might lay his hand upon us
both.

³⁴ Let him take his rod away from me,
and let not dread of him terrify me.

³⁵ Then I would speak without fear of
him,
for I am not so in myself.

10 “I loathe my life;
I will give free utterance to my
complaint;
I will speak in the bitterness of my
soul.

² I will say to God, Do not condemn
me;
let me know why thou dost
contend against me.

³ Does it seem good to thee to oppress,
to despise the work of thy hands
and favor the designs of the
wicked?

⁴ Hast thou eyes of flesh?

Dost thou see as man sees?

⁵ Are thy days as the days of man,
or thy years as man's years,

⁶ that thou dost seek out my iniquity
and search for my sin,

⁷ although thou knowest that I am not
guilty,

and there is none to deliver out of
thy hand?

⁸ Thy hands fashioned and made me;
and now thou dost turn about and
destroy me.”

⁹ Remember that thou hast made me
of clay;^w

and wilt thou turn me to dust
again?

¹⁰ Didst thou not pour me out like milk
and curdle me like cheese?

¹¹ Thou didst clothe me with skin and
flesh,

and knit me together with bones
and sinews.

¹² Thou has granted me life and
steadfast love;
and thy care has preserved my
spirit.

¹³ Yet these things thou didst hide in
thy heart;

I know that this was thy purpose.

¹⁴ If I sin, thou dost mark me,
and dost not acquit me of my
iniquity.

¹⁵ If I am wicked, woe to me!

If I am righteous, I cannot lift up
my head,

for I am filled with disgrace
and look upon my affliction.

¹⁶ And if I lift myself up,^x thou dost
hunt me like a lion,
and again work wonders against
me;

¹⁷ thou dost renew thy witnesses
against me,
and increase thy vexation toward
me;

^u Another reading is *Would that there were*

^v Cn Compare Gk Syr: *Heb made me together round*

about and thou dost destroy me

^w Gk: *Heb like clay* ^x Syr: *Heb he lifts himself up*

30–31: Man's willingness to wash himself cannot prevent God from throwing him back into the mud. **33:** *There is no umpire between us*, not merely an umpire who decides, but a conciliator, a go-between, an intermediary, a mediator, since such a being *would lay his hand upon us both*. **10.1–22:** Although God is remote, the hero obstinately and tenderly addresses him in prayer. **8–12:** He appeals to the love of an artist for his handiwork (compare Ps.139.14–18). **18–19:**

- thou dost bring fresh hosts against me.^y
- 18 "Why didst thou bring me forth from the womb?
Would that I had died before any eye had seen me,
19 and were as though I had not been, carried from the womb to the grave.
20 Are not the days of my life few?^z
Let me alone, that I may find a little comfort^a
21 before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of gloom and deep darkness,
22 the land of gloom^b and chaos, where light is as darkness."

|| Then Zophar the Na'amathite answered:

- 2 "Should a multitude of words go unanswered,
and a man full of talk be vindicated?
3 Should your babble silence men, and when you mock, shall no one shame you?
4 For you say, 'My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in God's eyes.'
5 But oh, that God would speak, and open his lips to you,
6 and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom!
For he is manifold in understanding.^c
Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.
- 7 "Can you find out the deep things of God?
Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?
8 It is higher than heaven^d—what can you do?

- Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?
9 Its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.
10 If he passes through, and imprisons, and calls to judgment, who can hinder him?
11 For he knows worthless men; when he sees iniquity, will he not consider it?
12 But a stupid man will get understanding, when a wild ass's colt is born a man.
13 "If you set your heart aright, you will stretch out your hands toward him.
14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in your tents.
15 Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure, and will not fear.
16 You will forget your misery; you will remember it as waters that have passed away.
17 And your life will be brighter than the noonday; its darkness will be like the morning.
18 And you will have confidence, because there is hope; you will be protected^e and take your rest in safety.
19 You will lie down, and none will make you afraid; many will entreat your favor.
20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail;

^y Cn Compare Gk: Heb *changes and a host are with me*

^z Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb *Are not my days few? Let him cease*

^a Heb *brighten up*

^b Heb *gloom as darkness, deep darkness*

^c Heb *obscure* ^d Heb *The heights of heaven*

^e Or *you will look around*

The sufferer is attracted by the theme of non-being. 20–22: At the same time he laments the proximity and the inevitability of death.

11.1–20: **First discourse of Zophar.** The third friend cannot restrain his theological passion. 4: It is not quite true that Job has claimed purity of *doctrine*. 6: At last the direct charge is made: the sufferer is told that he deserves his misery as a penalty for his *guilt*. The poet indicates a development of thought among the three friends up to this point; afterwards the arguments are merely repeated in various forms. Bildad is quite wrong in charging Job with ethical crimes, but he is right in stressing man's finitude in the face of God's infinity (v. 7), another illustration of the poet's skill at showing the complexity of truth mixed with error in the minds of the friends.

all way of escape will be lost to them,
and their hope is to breathe their last."

12 Then Job answered:
² "No doubt you are the people,
and wisdom will die with you.

³ But I have understanding as well as you;
I am not inferior to you.
Who does not know such things as these?

⁴ I am a laughingstock to my friends;
I, who called upon God and he answered me,
a just and blameless man, am a laughingstock.

⁵ In the thought of one who is at ease
there is contempt for misfortune;
it is ready for those whose feet slip.

⁶ The tents of robbers are at peace,
and those who provoke God are secure,
who bring their god in their hand.

⁷ "But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

⁸ or the plants of the earth,^g and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

⁹ Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?

¹⁰ In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of all mankind.

¹¹ Does not the ear try words
as the palate tastes food?

¹² Wisdom is with the aged,
and understanding in length of days.

¹³ "With God^h are wisdom and might;
he has counsel and understanding.

¹⁴ If he tears down, none can rebuild;
if he shuts a man in, none can open.

¹⁵ If he withholds the waters, they dry up;
if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land.

¹⁶ With him are strength and wisdom;
the deceived and the deceiver are his.

¹⁷ He leads counselors away stripped,
and judges he makes fools.

¹⁸ He looses the bonds of kings,
and binds a waistcloth on their loins.

¹⁹ He leads priests away stripped,
and overthrows the mighty.

²⁰ He deprives of speech those who are trusted,
and takes away the discernment of the elders.

²¹ He pours contempt on princes,
and looses the belt of the strong.

²² He uncovers the deeps out of darkness,
and brings deep darkness to light.

²³ He makes nations great, and he destroys them:
he enlarges nations, and leads them away.

²⁴ He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth,
and makes them wander in a pathless waste.

²⁵ They grope in the dark without light;
and he makes them stagger like a drunken man.

13 "Lo, my eye has seen all this,
my ear has heard and understood it.

^f Hebrew uncertain
^g Or speak to the earth
^h Heb him

12.1-14.22: Reply of Job. **12.2-3:** The sick man replies with heavy sarcasm. **4:** *And he answered me*; the Hebrew, with a change of vowels, may be read, "that he might answer me"; or better, translate "and he oppressed me." **6:** *Who bring their god in their hand*. Job seems to discern that there can be a spiritual form of idolatry, whenever man makes his own power the object of his ultimate concern. **7-25:** Divine omnipotence knows neither obstacle nor law. **13.1-12:** In spite of God's lawlessness, the friends who are *worthless physicians* (v. 4) will not

- ² What you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.
- ³ But I would speak to the Almighty,
and I desire to argue my case with
God.
- ⁴ As for you, you whitewash with lies;
worthless physicians are you all.
- ⁵ Oh that you would keep silent,
and it would be your wisdom!
- ⁶ Hear now my reasoning,
and listen to the pleadings of my
lips.
- ⁷ Will you speak falsely for God,
and speak deceitfully for him?
- ⁸ Will you show partiality toward him,
will you plead the case for God?
- ⁹ Will it be well with you when he
searches you out?
Or can you deceive him, as one
deceives a man?
- ¹⁰ He will surely rebuke you
if in secret you show partiality.
- ¹¹ Will not his majesty terrify you,
and the dread of him fall upon
you?
- ¹² Your maxims are proverbs of ashes,
your defenses are defenses of clay.
- ¹³ "Let me have silence, and I will
speak,
and let come on me what may.
- ¹⁴ I will takeⁱ my flesh in my teeth,
and put my life in my hand.
- ¹⁵ Behold, he will slay me; I have no
hope;
yet I will defend my ways to his
face.
- ¹⁶ This will be my salvation,
that a godless man shall not come
before him.
- ¹⁷ Listen carefully to my words,
and let my declaration be in your
ears.
- ¹⁸ Behold, I have prepared my case;
I know that I shall be vindicated.
- ¹⁹ Who is there that will contend with
me?
For then I would be silent and die.
- ²⁰ Only grant two things to me,
then I will not hide myself from
thy face:
- ²¹ withdraw thy hand far from me,
and let not dread of thee terrify
me.
- ²² Then call, and I will answer;
or let me speak, and do thou reply
to me.
- ²³ How many are my iniquities and my
sins?
Make me know my transgression
and my sin.
- ²⁴ Why dost thou hide thy face,
and count me as thy enemy?
- ²⁵ Wilt thou frighten a driven leaf
and pursue dry chaff?
- ²⁶ For thou writest bitter things against
me,
and makest me inherit the
iniquities of my youth.
- ²⁷ Thou puttest my feet in the stocks,
and watchest all my paths;
thou settest a bound to the soles of
my feet.
- ²⁸ Man^j wastes away like a rotten thing,
like a garment that is moth-eaten.
- 14** "Man that is born of a woman
is of few days, and full of trouble.
² He comes forth like a flower, and
withers;

ⁱ Gk; Heb *Why should I take?*^j Heb *He*

escape the Deity's rebuke (v. 10). **15:** *I have no hope*, the time-honored rendering, "yet will I trust in him," is based on a pious note in the margin of the manuscripts. The negative in the Hebrew text is supported by the context, which suggests a mood of defiance, not of selfless devotion. Job no longer claims that he is blameless; however, he discovers in the depth of his despair that his passionate desire to see God, his would-be slayer, is evidence of his inward purity, for *no godless* man would ever dare to *come before* God (v. 16). **23:** Job is willing to learn from God whether his *iniquities*, his *sins*, and his *transgressions* are the cause of his misery. **24:** The prayer remains unanswered, and God continues to *hide his face*, even to count Job an *enemy*. **26:** In his search for an explanation of his pain, the hero acknowledges *the iniquities of his youth*, but he implies that the enormity of his fate is disproportionate. **14.1-22:** One of the great poems in all literature. **1:** *Man that is born of a woman . . .*, as in 7.1, the poet is concerned with the human condition in general. No implication is to be drawn from this verse on the

- he flees like a shadow, and continues not.
- ³ And dost thou open thy eyes upon such a one and bring him^k into judgment with thee?
- ⁴ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?
- There is not one.
- ⁵ Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with thee, and thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass,
- ⁶ look away from him, and desist,^l that he may enjoy, like a hireling, his day.
- ⁷ "For there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease.
- ⁸ Though its root grow old in the earth, and its stump die in the ground,
- ⁹ yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth branches like a young plant.
- ¹⁰ But man dies, and is laid low; man breathes his last, and where is he?
- ¹¹ As waters fail from a lake, and a river wastes away and dries up,
- ¹² so man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more he will not awake, or be roused out of his sleep.
- ¹³ Oh that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol, that thou wouldest conceal me until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!
- ¹⁴ If a man die, shall he live again?
- All the days of my service I would wait, till my release should come.
- ¹⁵ Thou wouldest call, and I would answer thee; thou wouldest long for the work of thy hands.
- ¹⁶ For then thou wouldest number my steps, thou wouldest not keep watch over my sin;
- ¹⁷ my transgression would be sealed up in a bag, and thou wouldest cover over my iniquity.
- ¹⁸ "But the mountain falls and crumbles away, and the rock is removed from its place;
- ¹⁹ the waters wear away the stones; the torrents wash away the soil of the earth; so thou destroyest the hope of man.
- ²⁰ Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passes; thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.
- ²¹ His sons come to honor, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he perceives it not.
- ²² He feels only the pain of his own body, and he mourns only for himself."
- 15** Then Eli'phaz the Te'manite answered:
- ² "Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind?
- ³ Should he argue in unprofitable talk,

^k Gk Syr Vg: Heb me^l Cn: Heb that he may desist

responsibility of womanhood for transmitting impurity to children, which is the lot of all men and women (see v. 4). **16:** *For then thou wouldst number my steps*, translate, "Now thou numberest my steps"; the phrase implies malevolence. Perhaps v. 16a contrasts the present horror with the hope of v. 16b. **17:** Read, "My transgression is sealed up in a bag and thou sewest up my iniquity."

15.1-35: Second discourse of Eliphaz. A second round of discussion now begins. **2-3:** This time the speaker dispenses completely with soothing formulas of introduction (contrast 4.1-4). Job's remonstrances do not befit *a wise man*. **4:** The insecurity of traditional opinion faces the

- or in words with which he can do no good?
- ⁴ But you are doing away with the fear of God,
and hindering meditation before God.
- ⁵ For your iniquity teaches your mouth,
and you choose the tongue of the crafty.
- ⁶ Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;
your own lips testify against you.
- ⁷ "Are you the first man that was born?
Or were you brought forth before the hills?
- ⁸ Have you listened in the council of God?
And do you limit wisdom to yourself?
- ⁹ What do you know that we do not know?
What do you understand that is not clear to us?
- ¹⁰ Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us,
older than your father.
- ¹¹ Are the consolations of God too small for you,
or the word that deals gently with you?
- ¹² Why does your heart carry you away,
and why do your eyes flash,
¹³ that you turn your spirit against God,
and let such words go out of your mouth?
- ¹⁴ What is man, that he can be clean?
Or he that is born of a woman,
that he can be righteous?
- ¹⁵ Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones,
and the heavens are not clean in his sight;
- ¹⁶ how much less one who is abominable and corrupt,
a man who drinks iniquity like water!
- ¹⁷ "I will show you, hear me;
and what I have seen I will declare
- ¹⁸ (what wise men have told,
and their fathers have not hidden,
¹⁹ to whom alone the land was given,
and no stranger passed among them).
- ²⁰ The wicked man writhes in pain all his days,
through all the years that are laid up for the ruthless.
- ²¹ Terrifying sounds are in his ears;
in prosperity the destroyer will come upon him.
- ²² He does not believe that he will return out of darkness,
and he is destined for the sword.
- ²³ He wanders abroad for bread,
saying, 'Where is it?'
He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand;
- ²⁴ distress and anguish terrify him;
they prevail against him, like a king prepared for battle.
- ²⁵ Because he has stretched forth his hand against God,
and bids defiance to the Almighty,
²⁶ running stubbornly against him with a thick-bossed shield;
²⁷ because he has covered his face with his fat,
and gathered fat upon his loins,
²⁸ and has lived in desolate cities,
in houses which no man should inhabit,
which were destined to become heaps of ruins;

courage of non-conformism. Moffatt translates, "You undermine religion." **7:** *Are you the first man that was born?* Eliphaz perceives that Job the heretic is also Job the Titan, a rebel against God. The sufferer speaks the language of the *crafty* (like the serpent in Gen.3.1). Borrowing the Semitic myth of the Primeval Man who existed before the creation of the world, Eliphaz sees quite clearly that Job, through the intensity of his grief, forgets the limitations of his humanity. Like Adam (Gen.3.5), Job wishes to be similar to God, setting up himself as judge of his Creator. Like personified Wisdom (Pr.8.25b), he thinks that he was *brought forth before the hills*. **11:** Eliphaz commits the same crime of which he accuses the hero, since he calls his own words *the consolations of God*. **14-16:** The traditionalist repeats himself (compare 4.17-19).

- ²⁹ he will not be rich, and his wealth
will not endure,
nor will he strike root in the
earth;^m
- ³⁰ he will not escape from darkness;
the flame will dry up his shoots,
and his blossomⁿ will be swept
away^o by the wind.
- ³¹ Let him not trust in emptiness,
deceiving himself;
for emptiness will be his
recompense.
- ³² It will be paid in full before his time,
and his branch will not be green.
- ³³ He will shake off his unripe grape,
like the vine,
and cast off his blossom, like the
olive tree.
- ³⁴ For the company of the godless is
barren,
and fire consumes the tents of
bribery.
- ³⁵ They conceive mischief and bring
forth evil
and their heart prepares deceit.”

16 Then Job answered:
² “I have heard many such things;
miserable comforters are you all.

³ Shall windy words have an end?
Or what provokes you that you
answer?

⁴ I also could speak as you do,
if you were in my place;
I could join words together against
you,
and shake my head at you.

⁵ I could strengthen you with my
mouth,
and the solace of my lips would
assuage your pain.

⁶ “If I speak, my pain is not assuaged,
and if I forbear, how much of it
leaves me?

⁷ Surely now God has worn me out;
he has^p made desolate all my
company.

⁸ And he has^p shriveled me up,

which is a witness against me;
and my leanness has risen up against
me,
it testifies to my face.

⁹ He has torn me in his wrath, and
hated me;
he has gnashed his teeth at me;
my adversary sharpens his eyes
against me.

¹⁰ Men have gaped at me with their
mouth,
they have struck me insolently
upon the cheek,
they mass themselves together
against me.

¹¹ God gives me up to the ungodly,
and casts me into the hands of the
wicked.

¹² I was at ease, and he broke me
asunder;
he seized me by the neck and
dashed me to pieces;

he set me up as his target,
¹³ his archers surround me.
He slashes open my kidneys, and
does not spare;
he pours out my gall on the
ground.

¹⁴ He breaks me with breach upon
breach;
he runs upon me like a warrior.

¹⁵ I have sewed sackcloth upon my
skin,
and have laid my strength in the
dust.

¹⁶ My face is red with weeping,
and on my eyelids is deep
darkness;

¹⁷ although there is no violence in my
hands,
and my prayer is pure.

¹⁸ “O earth, cover not my blood,
and let my cry find no resting
place.

¹⁹ Even now, behold, my witness is in
heaven,

m Vg: Heb obscure *n* Gk: Heb mouth
o Cn: Heb will depart *p* Heb thou hast

16.1-17.16: Reply of Job. 16.1-17: In the face of God's continuing hostility (vv. 6-16), Job reaffirms his innocence (v. 17). 18: His "murder" must be avenged; personified *earth* is invited to assist in the avenging (compare Gen.4.10-11). 18-22: Some believe that Job appeals from God the slayer to God the heavenly *witness*. Such a view, however, is syntactically difficult,

and he that vouches for me is on high.
²⁰ My friends scorn me;
 my eye pours out tears to God,
²¹ that he would maintain the right of a man with God,
 like^a that of a man with his neighbor.
²² For when a few years have come
 I shall go the way whence I shall not return.
17 My spirit is broken, my days are extinct,
 the grave is ready for me.
² Surely there are mockers about me,
 and my eye dwells on their provocation.
³ "Lay down a pledge for me with thyself;
 who is there that will give surety for me?
⁴ Since thou hast closed their minds to understanding,
 therefore thou wilt not let them triumph.
⁵ He who informs against his friends to get a share of their property,
 the eyes of his children will fail.
⁶ "He has made me a byword of the peoples,
 and I am one before whom men spit.
⁷ My eye has grown dim from grief,
 and all my members are like a shadow.
⁸ Upright men are appalled at this,
 and the innocent stirs himself up against the godless.
⁹ Yet the righteous holds to his way,
 and he that has clean hands grows stronger and stronger.
¹⁰ But you, come on again, all of you,
 and I shall not find a wise man among you.

¹¹ My days are past, my plans are broken off,
 the desires of my heart.
¹² They make night into day;
 'The light,' they say, 'is near to the darkness.'
¹³ If I look for Sheol as my house,
 if I spread my couch in darkness,
¹⁴ if I say to the pit, 'You are my father,'
 and to the worm, 'My mother,' or 'My sister,'
¹⁵ where then is my hope?
 Who will see my hope?
¹⁶ Will it go down to the bars of Sheol?
 Shall we descend together into the dust?"

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:
² "How long will you hunt for words?
 Consider, and then we will speak.
³ Why are we counted as cattle?
 Why are we stupid in your sight?
⁴ You who tear yourself in your anger,
 shall the earth be forsaken for you,
 or the rock be removed out of its place?
⁵ "Yea, the light of the wicked is put out,
 and the flame of his fire does not shine.
⁶ The light is dark in his tent,
 and his lamp above him is put out.
⁷ His strong steps are shortened
 and his own schemes throw him down.
⁸ For he is cast into a net by his own feet,
 and he walks on a pitfall.
⁹ A trap seizes him by the heel,
 a snare lays hold of him.
¹⁰ A rope is hid for him in the ground,
 a trap for him in the path.

q Syr Vg Tg: Heb and r Heb obscure

since the same witness is expected to *maintain the right of a man with God* (v. 21). In all probability the poet remembers the earlier theme of the mediator (9.33–35). Progress of thought, however, leads Job to abandon that dream and to substitute for it a present certainty. **17.1–10:** Job's fate has made him a *byword*; he criticizes his friends, who have failed him. **6:** Compare Ps.69.11. *Spit*, see 30.10. **11–16:** Job turns again to the thought of his death.

18.1–21: Second discourse of Bildad. **2–4:** *Counted as beasts*, perhaps a reference to Job's words in 12.7. *Rock be removed*, compare 14.18. **5–21:** The ungodly man receives through his

¹¹ Terrors frighten him on every side,
 and chase him at his heels.
¹² His strength is hunger-bitten,
 and calamity is ready for his
 stumbling.
¹³ By disease his skin is consumed,^s
 the first-born of death consumes
 his limbs.
¹⁴ He is torn from the tent in which he
 trusted,
 and is brought to the king of
 terrors.
¹⁵ In his tent dwells that which is none
 of his;
 brimstone is scattered upon his
 habitation.
¹⁶ His roots dry up beneath,
 and his branches wither above.
¹⁷ His memory perishes from the earth,
 and he has no name in the street.
¹⁸ He is thrust from light into darkness,
 and driven out of the world.
¹⁹ He has no offspring or descendant
 among his people,
 and no survivor where he used to
 live.
²⁰ They of the west are appalled at his
 day,
 and horror seizes them of the east.
²¹ Surely such are the dwellings of the
 ungodly,
 such is the place of him who
 knows not God.”

19 Then Job answered:
² “How long will you torment me,
 and break me in pieces with
 words?
³ These ten times you have cast
 reproach upon me;
 are you not ashamed to wrong me?
⁴ And even if it be true that I have
 erred,
 my error remains with myself.

⁵ If indeed you magnify yourselves
 against me,
 and make my humiliation an
 argument against me,
⁶ know then that God has put me in
 the wrong,
 and closed his net about me.
⁷ Behold, I cry out, ‘Violence!’ but I
 am not answered;
 I call aloud, but there is no justice.
⁸ He has walled up my way, so that I
 cannot pass,
 and he has set darkness upon my
 paths.
⁹ He has stripped from me my glory,
 and taken the crown from my
 head.
¹⁰ He breaks me down on every side,
 and I am gone,
 and my hope has he pulled up like
 a tree.
¹¹ He has kindled his wrath against me,
 and counts me as his adversary.
¹² His troops come on together;
 they have cast up siegeworks^t
 against me,
 and encamp round about my tent.
¹³ “He has put my brethren far from
 me,
 and my acquaintances are wholly
 estranged from me.
¹⁴ My kinsfolk and my close friends
 have failed me;
¹⁵ the guests in my house have
 forgotten me;
 my maidservants count me as a
 stranger;
 I have become an alien in their
 eyes.
¹⁶ I call to my servant, but he gives me
 no answer;

^s Cn: Heb *it consumes the limbs of his skin*
^t Heb *their way*

disease, which is *the first-born of death*, a foretaste of his ultimate fate, when he will be brought before *the king of terrors* (v. 14). Job has spoken of a witness who will vouch for him after his demise (16.19), but he has no *offspring*, *descendant*, or *survivor* (v. 19). **20:** Only the memory of his crimes will remain for ever as an example of horror among peoples of *west and east*.

19.1–29: Reply of Job. The sufferer discerns that he is now completely isolated. **2–6:** His friends do not understand. **4:** *Even if it be true that I have erred* (see 6.24 n.), *my error remains with myself*, my words may have been in error, but they concern only myself and do not constitute an offense against God or man. **7–12:** God’s enmity has lowered Job below the dignity of man (v. 9; compare 7.17). **13–19:** Society has likewise expelled Job from its ranks, even his

- I must beseech him with my mouth.
- ¹⁷ I am repulsive to my wife,
loathsome to the sons of my own mother.
- ¹⁸ Even young children despise me;
when I rise they talk against me.
- ¹⁹ All my intimate friends abhor me,
and those whom I loved have turned against me.
- ²⁰ My bones cleave to my skin and to my flesh,
and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.
- ²¹ Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends,
for the hand of God has touched me!
- ²² Why do you, like God, pursue me?
Why are you not satisfied with my flesh?
- ²³ "Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
- ²⁴ Oh that with an iron pen and lead
they were graven in the rock for ever!
- ²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer^u
lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth;"
- ²⁶ and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then from^w my flesh I shall see God,*
- ²⁷ whom I shall see on my side,^y
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me!
- ²⁸ If you say, 'How we will pursue him!'
and, 'The root of the matter is found in him';
- ²⁹ be afraid of the sword,
for wrath brings the punishment of the sword,
that you may know there is a judgment."
- 20** Then Zophar the Na'amathite answered:
² "Therefore my thoughts answer me,
because of my haste within me.
³ I hear censure which insults me,
and out of my understanding a spirit answers me.
⁴ Do you not know this from of old,
since man was placed upon earth,
⁵ that the exulting of the wicked is short,
and the joy of the godless but for a moment?"
- ^u Or Vindicator ^v Or dust ^w Or without
^x The meaning of this verse is uncertain
^y Or for myself

most intimate circle of household, family, and friends. **20:** *I have escaped with the skin of my teeth*, an expression of proverbial origin which has received many different interpretations, all of which are hypothetical. **21–22:** *Have pity on me, O you my friends*, a pathetic appeal which stresses Job's total solitariness. **23–24:** He therefore wishes that his words were written so that he may be vindicated by posterity. *In a book*, on a copper scroll, which will resist the ravages of time. *In the rock*, as some inscriptions engraved on a cliff in Lebanon by military conquerors of many centuries. **25:** *My Redeemer*, translate, *my Vindicator* (see note *u*), one who will avenge my honor after my murder has been committed. The avenger (2 Sam. 14.11) is usually the next-of-kin and the heir (Lev. 25.25; Dt. 25.5–10; Ru. 2.20). Though God is often called "redeemer" (Ex. 6.6; Ps. 103.4), it is not likely that Job's "Vindicator" should be identified with the divine Being. The Vindicator *at last will stand upon the earth*; the sufferer has already called for a mediator between God and man (9.33–35) and for a witness who will defend man before God (16.19–21); he hopes to obtain through the Vindicator an audience with God himself (v. 26). In his utmost destitution, rejected by friends, deprived of heirs, attacked by God, uncertain of future fame, Job's faith leaps for a moment to the certainty that after death his most cherished wish will be fulfilled. **26–27:** *From my flesh*, Job insists that he will see God. The Hebrew of v. 26 is corrupt, perhaps as a result of an accident or of scribal polemics against the later Jewish belief in the resurrection of the flesh. Whether or not Job expresses here a new faith in life beyond death, he no longer asks for a recognition of his innocence. The vision of God will be sufficient (42.5–6).

20.1–29: Second discourse of Zophar. **2:** *Therefore my thoughts answer*, the Hebrew noun implies disturbing and anxious reflections, and the line means, "My disquieting thoughts cause me to answer." *Haste*, i.e. agitation. Job's obstinacy is matched by his theological vigor. For a

- ⁶ Though his height mount up to the heavens,
and his head reach to the clouds,
⁷ he will perish for ever like his own dung;
those who have seen him will say,
‘Where is he?’
⁸ He will fly away like a dream, and not be found;
he will be chased away like a vision of the night.
⁹ The eye which saw him will see him no more,
nor will his place any more behold him.
¹⁰ His children will seek the favor of the poor,
and his hands will give back his wealth.
¹¹ His bones are full of youthful vigor,
but it will lie down with him in the dust.
- ¹² “Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth,
though he hides it under his tongue,
¹³ though he is loath to let it go,
and holds it in his mouth,
¹⁴ yet his food is turned in his stomach;
it is the gall of asps within him.
¹⁵ He swallows down riches and vomits them up again;
God casts them out of his belly.
¹⁶ He will suck the poison of asps;
the tongue of a viper will kill him.
¹⁷ He will not look upon the rivers,
the streams flowing with honey and curds.
¹⁸ He will give back the fruit of his toil,
and will not swallow it down;
from the profit of his trading
he will get no enjoyment.
¹⁹ For he has crushed and abandoned the poor,
he has seized a house which he did not build.
- ²⁰ “Because his greed knew no rest,
he will not save anything in which he delights.
²¹ There was nothing left after he had eaten;
therefore his prosperity will not endure.
²² In the fulness of his sufficiency he will be in straits;
all the force of misery will come upon him.
²³ To fill his belly to the full
God^z will send his fierce anger into him,
and rain it upon him as his food.^a
²⁴ He will flee from an iron weapon;
a bronze arrow will strike him through.
²⁵ It is drawn forth and comes out of his body,
the glittering point comes out of his gall;
terrors come upon him.
²⁶ Utter darkness is laid up for his treasures;
a fire not blown upon will devour him;
what is left in his tent will be consumed.
²⁷ The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
and the earth will rise up against him.
²⁸ The possessions of his house will be carried away,
dragged off in the day of God’s^b wrath.
²⁹ This is the wicked man’s portion from God,
the heritage decreed for him by God.”

21 Then Job answered:
² “Listen carefully to my words,
and let this be your consolation.
³ Bear with me, and I will speak,
and after I have spoken, mock on.

^z Heb he ^a Cn: Heb in his flesh ^b Heb his

moment Zophar is shaken out of his static certainty, but he soon reaffirms the thesis of individual retribution (vv. 4-29).

21.1-34: Reply of Job. In a bold display of worldly skepticism, the sufferer retorts that the wicked usually remain unpunished (vv. 7-13) though they repudiate God (vv. 14-18), that the belief in hereditary guilt (collective responsibility) is immoral (vv. 19-26), as is also the honorable

⁴ As for me, is my complaint against man?

Why should I not be impatient?

⁵ Look at me, and be appalled,
and lay your hand upon your mouth.

⁶ When I think of it I am dismayed,
and shuddering seizes my flesh.

⁷ Why do the wicked live,
reach old age, and grow mighty
in power?

⁸ Their children are established in
their presence,
and their offspring before their eyes.

⁹ Their houses are safe from fear,
and no rod of God is upon them.

¹⁰ Their bull breeds without fail;
their cow calves, and does not cast
her calf.

¹¹ They send forth their little ones like
a flock,
and their children dance.

¹² They sing to the tambourine and the
lyre,
and rejoice to the sound of the
pipe.

¹³ They spend their days in prosperity,
and in peace they go down to
Sheol.

¹⁴ They say to God, 'Depart from us!
We do not desire the knowledge
of thy ways.

¹⁵ What is the Almighty, that we
should serve him?
And what profit do we get if we
pray to him?"

¹⁶ Behold, is not their prosperity in
their hand?
The counsel of the wicked is far
from me.

¹⁷ "How often is it that the lamp of the
wicked is put out?
That their calamity comes upon
them?
That God^c distributes pains in his
anger?

¹⁸ That they are like straw before the
wind,

and like chaff that the storm
carries away?

¹⁹ You say, 'God stores up their
iniquity for their sons.'

Let him recompense it to
themselves, that they may
know it.

²⁰ Let their own eyes see their
destruction,
and let them drink of the wrath of
the Almighty.

²¹ For what do they care for their
houses after them,
when the number of their months
is cut off?

²² Will any teach God knowledge,
seeing that he judges those that are
on high?

²³ One dies in full prosperity,
being wholly at ease and secure,

²⁴ his body^d full of fat
and the marrow of his bones moist.

²⁵ Another dies in bitterness of soul,
never having tasted of good.

²⁶ They lie down alike in the dust,
and the worms cover them.

²⁷ "Behold, I know your thoughts,
and your schemes to wrong me.

²⁸ For you say, 'Where is the house of
the prince?
Where is the tent in which the
wicked dwelt?"

²⁹ Have you not asked those who travel
the roads,
and do you not accept their
testimony

³⁰ that the wicked man is spared in the
day of calamity,
that he is rescued in the day of
wrath?

³¹ Who declares his way to his face,
and who requites him for what he
has done?

³² When he is borne to the grave,
watch is kept over his tomb.

³³ The clods of the valley are sweet to
him;

^c Heb he

^d The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

funeral of the wicked (vv. 27–34). 15: The wicked agree with the thesis brought forward by Satan in the prologue (1.9).

all men follow after him,
and those who go before him are
innumerable.

³⁴ How then will you comfort me with
empty nothings?
There is nothing left of your
answers but falsehood.”

22 Then Eli'phaz the Te'manite
answered:

² “Can a man be profitable to God?
Surely he who is wise is profitable
to himself.

³ Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if
you are righteous,
or is it gain to him if you make
your ways blameless?

⁴ Is it for your fear of him that he
reproves you,
and enters into judgment with you?

⁵ Is not your wickedness great?
There is no end to your iniquities.

⁶ For you have exacted pledges of your
brothers for nothing,
and stripped the naked of their
clothing.

⁷ You have given no water to the weary
to drink,
and you have withheld bread from
the hungry.

⁸ The man with power possessed the
land,
and the favored man dwelt in it.

⁹ You have sent widows away empty,
and the arms of the fatherless were
crushed.

¹⁰ Therefore snares are round about
you,
and sudden terror overwhelms
you;

¹¹ your light is darkened, so that^e you
cannot see,
and a flood of water covers you.

¹² “Is not God high in the heavens?
See the highest stars, how lofty
they are!

¹³ Therefore you say, ‘What does God
know?
Can he judge through the deep
darkness?

¹⁴ Thick clouds enwrap him, so that he
does not see,
and he walks on the vault of
heaven.’

¹⁵ Will you keep to the old way
which wicked men have trod?

¹⁶ They were snatched away before
their time;
their foundation was washed away.

¹⁷ They said to God, ‘Depart from us,’
and ‘What can the Almighty do to
us?’

¹⁸ Yet he filled their houses with good
things—
but the counsel of the wicked is far
from me.

¹⁹ The righteous see it and are glad;
the innocent laugh them to scorn,

²⁰ saying, ‘Surely our adversaries are
cut off,
and what they left the fire has
consumed.’

²¹ “Agree with God, and be at peace;
thereby good will come to you.

²² Receive instruction from his mouth,
and lay up his words in your heart.

²³ If you return to the Almighty and
humble yourself,^g
if you remove unrighteousness far
from your tents,

²⁴ if you lay gold in the dust,
and gold of Ophir among the
stones of the torrent bed,

^e Cn Compare Gk: Heb or darkness

^f Gk Syr: Heb them

^g Gk: Heb you will be built up

22.1-30: Third discourse of Eliphaz. **2:** In his role as the self-appointed upholder of a lofty form of theism, Eliphaz stretches a truth to the absurd. Surely God does not need man (the word suggests a strong, vigorous man) or even a wise man. The renowned teacher, Eliphaz, admits that even a member of his own profession is not *profitable to God*! At the same time, religion is profitable to man. **3:** Job's righteousness would not give any *pleasure to the Almighty*. The friend implies a doctrine of an impassive deity, which is quite contrary to Biblical thought (Hos. ch. 9; Is. 62.5; Lk. 15.7). **17-18:** These words are almost identical with those of Job in 21.14-16; perhaps Eliphaz is quoting in order to rebuke. **18:** *From me*, read with the Greek version, “from him.”

²⁵ and if the Almighty is your gold,
and your precious silver;
²⁶ then you will delight yourself in the
Almighty,
and lift up your face to God.
²⁷ You will make your prayer to him,
and he will hear you;
and you will pay your vows.
²⁸ You will decide on a matter, and it
will be established for you,
and light will shine on your ways.
²⁹ For God abases the proud,^h
but he saves the lowly.
³⁰ He delivers the innocent man;ⁱ
you will be delivered through the
cleanness of your hands.”

23 Then Job answered:
² “Today also my complaint is
bitter,^j
his^k hand is heavy in spite of my
groaning.
³ Oh, that I knew where I might find
him,
that I might come even to his seat!
⁴ I would lay my case before him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
⁵ I would learn what he would answer
me,
and understand what he would
say to me.
⁶ Would he contend with me in the
greatness of his power?
No; he would give heed to me.
⁷ There an upright man could reason
with him,
and I should be acquitted for ever
by my judge.

⁸ “Behold, I go forward, but he is not
there;

and backward, but I cannot
perceive him;
⁹ on the left hand I seek him,^l but I
cannot behold him;
I^m turn to the right hand, but I
cannot see him.
¹⁰ But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tried me, I shall
come forth as gold.
¹¹ My foot has held fast to his steps;
I have kept his way and have not
turned aside.
¹² I have not departed from the
commandment of his lips;
I have treasured inⁿ my bosom
the words of his mouth.
¹³ But he is unchangeable and who
can turn him?
What he desires, that he does.
¹⁴ For he will complete what he
appoints for me;
and many such things are in his
mind.
¹⁵ Therefore I am terrified at his
presence;
when I consider, I am in dread of
him.
¹⁶ God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty has terrified me;
¹⁷ for I am^o hemmed in by darkness,
and thick darkness covers my
face.^p

24 “Why are not times of judgment
kept by the Almighty,
and why do those who know him
never see his days?

h Cn: Heb when they abased you said, Proud
i Gk Syr Vg: Heb him that is not innocent
j Syr Vg Tg: Heb rebellious *k* Gk Syr: Heb my
l Compare Syr: Heb on the left hand when he works
m Syr Vg: Heb he *n* Gk Vg: Heb from
o With one Ms: Heb am not *p* Vg: Heb from my face

23.1–24.17: Reply of Job. A new search for God’s presence. **2:** *Today*, this suggests that the discussion extended over a long period of time. Retain the Hebrew “rebellious” (note *j*); Job is aware of his revolt. **3–7:** For the absent God or the God who hides himself, see Ps.22.1–5; Is.45.15. Job seeks to obtain from the elusive judge an audience and a recognition of his virtue. **7:** *I should be acquitted for ever by my judge*, read with the Greek version, “I should recover my right for ever.” **8–17:** Job looks for God. **13:** *He is unchangeable*, literally, “he is in one,” which may mean, as paraphrased in the Greek, “he has decided.” There is no reference to his immutability. **17:** Perhaps render, “For I did not keep quiet in spite of the [coming] darkness,” or, “I am not overwhelmed by darkness,” since the terror of God is worse than the proximity of death (vv. 15–16). **24.1–17:** God pays no heed to prayer. **1.** The Hebrew is obscure; probably read, “Why are not times [i.e. events] kept hidden from the Almighty, since those who know him never see his days [i.e. of judgment]?” If God were not omniscient, the problem of evil would

- ² Men remove landmarks;
they seize flocks and pasture
them.
- ³ They drive away the ass of the
fatherless;
they take the widow's ox for a
pledge.
- ⁴ They thrust the poor off the road;
the poor of the earth all hide
themselves.
- ⁵ Behold, like wild asses in the desert
they go forth to their toil,
seeking prey in the wilderness
as food^q for their children.
- ⁶ They gather their^r fodder in the field
and they glean the vineyard of
the wicked man.
- ⁷ They lie all night naked, without
clothing,
and have no covering in the cold.
- ⁸ They are wet with the rain of the
mountains,
and cling to the rock for want of
shelter.
- ⁹ (There are those who snatch the
fatherless child from the
breast,
and take in pledge the infant of
the poor.)
- ¹⁰ They go about naked, without
clothing;
hungry, they carry the sheaves;
¹¹ among the olive rows of the
wicked^s they make oil;
they tread the wine presses, but
suffer thirst.
- ¹² From out of the city the dying
groan,
and the soul of the wounded
cries for help;
yet God pays no attention to their
prayer.
- ¹³ "There are those who rebel against
the light,
- who are not acquainted with its
ways,
and do not stay in its paths.
- ¹⁴ The murderer rises in the dark,^t
that he may kill the poor and
needy;
and in the night he is as a thief.
- ¹⁵ The eye of the adulterer also waits
for the twilight,
saying, 'No eye will see me';
and he disguises his face.
- ¹⁶ In the dark they dig through houses;
by day they shut themselves up;
they do not know the light.
- ¹⁷ For deep darkness is morning to all
of them;
for they are friends with the
terrors of deep darkness.
- ¹⁸ "You say, 'They are swiftly carried
away upon the face of the
waters;
their portion is cursed in the land;
no treader turns toward their
vineyards.
- ¹⁹ Drought and heat snatch away the
snow waters;
so does Sheol those who have
sinned.
- ²⁰ The squares of the town^u forget
them;
their name^v is no longer
remembered;
so wickedness is broken like a
tree.'
- ²¹ "They feed on the barren childless
woman,
and do no good to the widow.
- ²² Yet God^w prolongs the life of the
mighty by his power;
they rise up when they despair of
life.

q Heb food to him

r Heb his

s Heb their olive rows

t Cn: Heb at the light

u Cn: Heb obscure

v Cn: Heb a worm

w Heb he

not be a stumbling-block to men of faith. **12:** *The wounded*, perhaps read with the Greek version, "the little children."

24.18-25: Third discourse of Zophar (?). A fragment of what was probably the original third discourse of the third friend, now transferred to the mouth of Job by a pious editor who softened the hero's blasphemous arrogance (see also 27.13-23). This poetic section develops the dogma of individual retribution; God's justice may be delayed (v. 22), but it never fails (vv. 23-25). The RSV inserts the words, *You say* (v. 18), to indicate that these lines are a quotation of the friend's views made by Job.

²³ He gives them security, and they
are supported;
and his eyes are upon their ways.
²⁴ They are exalted a little while, and
then are gone;
they wither and fade like the
mallow;^x
they are cut off like the heads of
grain.
²⁵ If it is not so, who will prove me a
liar,
and show that there is nothing in
what I say?"

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite an-
swered:

² "Dominion and fear are with God;^y
he makes peace in his high
heaven.
³ Is there any number to his armies?
Upon whom does his light not
arise?
⁴ How then can man be righteous
before God?
How can he who is born of
woman be clean?
⁵ Behold, even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not clean in his
sight;
⁶ how much less man, who is a
maggot,
and the son of man, who is a
worm!"

26 Then Job answered:
² "How you have helped him
who has no power!

How you have saved the arm that
has no strength!
³ How you have counseled him who
has no wisdom,
and plentifully declared sound
knowledge!
⁴ With whose help have you uttered
words,
and whose spirit has come forth
from you?
⁵ The shades below tremble,
the waters and their inhabitants.
⁶ Sheol is naked before God,
and Abaddon has no covering.
⁷ He stretches out the north over
the void,
and hangs the earth upon nothing.
⁸ He binds up the waters in his thick
clouds,
and the cloud is not rent under
them.
⁹ He covers the face of the moon,^z
and spreads over it his cloud.
¹⁰ He has described a circle upon the
face of the waters
at the boundary between light
and darkness.
¹¹ The pillars of heaven tremble,
and are astounded at his rebuke.
¹² By his power he stilled the sea;
by his understanding he smote
Rahab.
¹³ By his wind the heavens were made
fair;
his hand pierced the fleeing
serpent.

x Gk: Heb all y Heb him z Or his throne

25.1-6: Third discourse of Bildad. The theme of man's uncleanness and abasement, already developed by Eliphaz (4.17-21; 15.14-16) and Zophar (11.5-12), to which Job has subscribed (9.2-12; 12.9-25; 14.4) without using it for self-accusation.

26.1-4: Reply of Job. The sufferer again uses heavy sarcasm. He implies that Bildad, however lofty the monotheism of the wise men may be on the surface, has communed with evil spirits.

26.5-14: Continuation of Bildad's third discourse (?). While the theme of divine omnipotence is not impossible in the mouth of Job, it has been ignored by the hero in the third round of discussion and is replaced by the theme of divine indifference. Moreover, this section is unrelated to its immediate context (vv. 2-4 and 27.2), while its ideas fit closely with those which have just been enunciated by Bildad. After referring to heaven and earth (25.2-6), the poet normally turns to *Sheol*. Job had hoped to be hidden in the underworld (14.13), but he cannot escape, even there, the reach of God (an idea common to wisdom literature, 12.22; Ps.139.7; Pr.15.11; see Am.9.2. 6: *Abaddon*, a name of *Sheol*, meaning "[place of] destruction" (Ps.88.11; Pr.15.11; Rev.9.11). 7: *Over the void . . . upon nothing*, the poet stresses the completeness of the creative act, an anticipation of the later doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" (from nothing). Pagan mythology with its dualistic cosmogony has influenced the poet's allusions to a cosmic fight (vv.10-13), but it is now absorbed in a completely monistic theology.

¹⁴ Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways;
and how small a whisper do we hear of him!
But the thunder of his power who can understand?"

27 And Job again took up his discourse, and said:

² "As God lives, who has taken away my right,
and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter;
³ as long as my breath is in me,
and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;
⁴ my lips will not speak falsehood,
and my tongue will not utter deceit.
⁵ Far be it from me to say that you are right;
till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.
⁶ I hold fast my righteousness, and will not let it go;
my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.

⁷ "Let my enemy be as the wicked,
and let him that rises up against me be as the unrighteous.
⁸ For what is the hope of the godless when God cuts him off,
when God takes away his life?
⁹ Will God hear his cry,
when trouble comes upon him?
¹⁰ Will he take delight in the Almighty?
Will he call upon God at all times?
¹¹ I will teach you concerning the hand of God;
what is with the Almighty I will not conceal.
¹² Behold, all of you have seen it yourselves;
why then have you become altogether vain?

¹³ "This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
and the heritage which oppressors receive from the Almighty:
¹⁴ If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword;
and his offspring have not enough to eat.
¹⁵ Those who survive him the pestilence buries,
and their widows make no lamentation.
¹⁶ Though he heap up silver like dust,
and pile up clothing like clay;
¹⁷ he may pile it up, but the just will wear it,
and the innocent will divide the silver.
¹⁸ The house which he builds is like a spider's web,^a
like a booth which a watchman makes.
¹⁹ He goes to bed rich, but will do so no more;^b
he opens his eyes, and his wealth is gone.
²⁰ Terrors overtake him like a flood;
in the night a whirlwind carries him off.
²¹ The east wind lifts him up and he is gone;
it sweeps him out of his place.
²² It^c hurls at him without pity;
he flees from its^d power in headlong flight.
²³ It^c claps its^d hands at him,
and hisses at him from its^d place.

28 "Surely there is a mine for silver,
and a place for gold which they refine.

² Iron is taken out of the earth,

^a Ca Compare Gk Syr: Heb *He builds his house like the moth*

^b Gk Compare Syr: Heb *shall not be gathered*

^c Or *he* (that is God) ^d Or *his*

27.1–12: Job's reply. Job again maintains his innocence and affirms his sincerity.

27.13–23: Continuation of third discourse of Zophar (?), see 24.18–25 n. A traditional picture of the destiny of the wicked and of his sons. After vv. 11–12 one would expect a new expression of defiance; therefore this section probably represents a fragment of the third speech of the third friend, now placed on the hero's lips.

28.1–28: Hymn on the inaccessibility of wisdom. Wisdom is not at the disposal of man but remains the prerogative of God (see refrains in vv. 12–13, 20–21). As Bildad had praised divine

- and copper is smelted from the ore.
- ³ Men put an end to darkness,
and search out to the farthest bound
the ore in gloom and deep darkness.
- ⁴ They open shafts in a valley away
from where men live;
they are forgotten by travelers,
they hang afar from men, they
swing to and fro.
- ⁵ As for the earth, out of it comes
bread;
but underneath it is turned up as
by fire.
- ⁶ Its stones are the place of sapphires,^e
and it has dust of gold.
- ⁷ "That path no bird of prey knows,
and the falcon's eye has not seen
it.
- ⁸ The proud beasts have not trodden
it;
the lion has not passed over it.
- ⁹ "Man puts his hand to the flinty
rock,
and overturns mountains by the
roots.
- ¹⁰ He cuts out channels in the rocks,
and his eye sees every precious
thing.
- ¹¹ He binds up the streams so that they
do not trickle,
and the thing that is hid he brings
forth to light.
- ¹² "But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of
understanding?
- ¹³ Man does not know the way to it,^f
and it is not found in the land of
the living.
- ¹⁴ The deep says, 'It is not in me,'
and the sea says, 'It is not with me.'
- ¹⁵ It cannot be gotten for gold,
and silver cannot be weighed as
its price.
- ¹⁶ It cannot be valued in the gold of
Ophir,
in precious onyx or sapphire.^g
- ¹⁷ Gold and glass cannot equal it,
nor can it be exchanged for jewels
of fine gold.
- ¹⁸ No mention shall be made of coral
or of crystal;
the price of wisdom is above
pearls.
- ¹⁹ The topaz of Ethiopia cannot
compare with it,
nor can it be valued in pure gold.
- ²⁰ "Whence then comes wisdom?
And where is the place of
understanding?
- ²¹ It is hid from the eyes of all living,
and concealed from the birds of
the air.
- ²² Abaddon and Death say,
'We have heard a rumor of it
with our ears.'
- ²³ "God understands the way to it,
and he knows its place.
- ²⁴ For he looks to the ends of the earth,
and sees everything under the
heavens.
- ²⁵ When he gave to the wind its weight,
and meted out the waters by
measure;
- ²⁶ when he made a decree for the rain,
and a way for the lightning of the
thunder;
- ²⁷ then he saw it and declared it;
he established it, and searched it
out.
- ²⁸ And he said to man,

^e Or lapis lazuli
^f Gk: Heb its price
^g Or lapis lazuli

power in heaven, earth, and Sheol (25.2-6; 26.5-14), the poet searches every part of the universe in order to discover divine wisdom. **1-22:** Human technology is powerless in the realm of divine knowledge. **2-6:** Allusions to Egyptian mines, probably in the Sinaitic peninsula. **14:** The forces of the deep and of the sea were deified by ancient man, who worshiped them in an effort to secure their favor and his safety. **23-27:** Wisdom is the exclusive property of God (Pr.8.22-31). **28:** The orthodox motto of the Jewish sages after the Babylonian exile; it reveals an entirely different concept of wisdom from that implied in the body of the poem. Here, wisdom is accessible to man and identified with piety (*the fear of the Lord*) and morality (*to depart from evil*).

'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
and to depart from evil is understanding' "

29 And Job again took up his discourse, and said:

² "Oh, that I were as in the months of old,
as in the days when God watched over me;

³ when his lamp shone upon my head,
and by his light I walked through darkness;

⁴ as I was in my autumn days,
when the friendship of God was upon my tent;

⁵ when the Almighty was yet with me,
when my children were about me;

⁶ when my steps were washed with milk,
and the rock poured out for me streams of oil!

⁷ When I went out to the gate of the city,
when I prepared my seat in the square,

⁸ the young men saw me and withdrew,
and the aged rose and stood;

⁹ the princes refrained from talking,
and laid their hand on their mouth;

¹⁰ the voice of the nobles was hushed,
and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

¹¹ When the ear heard, it called me blessed,
and when the eye saw, it approved;

¹² because I delivered the poor who cried,
and the fatherless who had none to help him.

¹³ The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me,
and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

¹⁴ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
my justice was like a robe and a turban.

¹⁵ I was eyes to the blind,
and feet to the lame.

¹⁶ I was a father to the poor,
and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know.

¹⁷ I broke the fangs of the unrighteous,
and made him drop his prey from his teeth.

¹⁸ Then I thought, 'I shall die in my nest,
and I shall multiply my days as the sand,

¹⁹ my roots spread out to the waters,
with the dew all night on my branches,

²⁰ my glory fresh with me,
and my bow ever new in my hand.'

²¹ "Men listened to me, and waited,
and kept silence for my counsel.

²² After I spoke they did not speak again,
and my word dropped upon them.

²³ They waited for me as for the rain;
and they opened their mouths as for the spring rain.

²⁴ I smiled on them when they had no confidence;
and the light of my countenance they did not cast down.

²⁵ I chose their way, and sat as chief,
and I dwelt like a king among his troops,
like one who comforts mourners.

30 "But now they make sport of me,
men who are younger than I,
whose fathers I would have disdained
to set with the dogs of my flock.

29.1-31.40: The final defense of Job. Contrasting his happy past (ch. 29) with the present distress (ch. 30), the sufferer delivers his final plea or oath of clearance (ch. 31). **29.4:** *In my autumn days*, literally, "in the days of fruit gathering," perhaps meaning, in the days of the full powers of his adulthood, rather than a reference to old age. The traditional picture of Job as an old man is not supported by the many incidental references to his vigorous maturity. The sufferer's agony is made the more cruel by the circumstance that he was stricken at the height of his physical and intellectual powers (v. 20). **18:** *As the sand*, with different vowels the Hebrew

- 2 What could I gain from the strength
 of their hands,
 men whose vigor is gone?
 3 Through want and hard hunger
 they gnaw the dry and desolate
 ground;^h
 4 they pick mallow and the leaves of
 bushes,
 and to warm themselves the roots
 of the broom.
 5 They are driven out from among
 men;
 they shout after them as after a
 thief.
 6 In the gullies of the torrents they
 must dwell,
 in holes of the earth and of the
 rocks.
 7 Among the bushes they bray;
 under the nettles they huddle
 together.
 8 A senseless, a disreputable brood,
 they have been whipped out of the
 land.
 9 "And now I have become their song,
 I am a byword to them.
 10 They abhor me, they keep aloof from
 me;
 they do not hesitate to spit at the
 sight of me.
 11 Because God has loosed my cord
 and humbled me,
 they have cast off restraint in my
 presence.
 12 On my right hand the rabble rise,
 they drive meⁱ forth,
 they cast up against me their ways
 of destruction.
 13 They break up my path,
 they promote my calamity;
 no one restrains^j them.
 14 As through^k a wide breach they
 come;
 amid the crash they roll on.
 15 Terrors are turned upon me;
 my honor is pursued as by the
 wind,
 and my prosperity has passed
 away like a cloud.
- 16 "And now my soul is poured out
 within me;
 days of affliction have taken hold
 of me.
 17 The night racks my bones,
 and the pain that gnaws me takes
 no rest.
 18 With violence it seizes my garment;^l
 it binds me about like the collar of
 my tunic.
 19 God has cast me into the mire,
 and I have become like dust and
 ashes.
 20 I cry to thee and thou dost not answer
 me;
 I stand, and thou dost not^m heed me.
 21 Thou hast turned cruel to me;
 with the might of thy hand thou
 dost persecute me.
 22 Thou liftest me up on the wind,
 thou makest me ride on it,
 and thou tosses me about in the
 roar of the storm.
 23 Yea, I know that thou wilt bring me
 to death,
 and to the house appointed for all
 living.
- 24 "Yet does not one in a heap of ruins
 stretch out his hand,
 and in his disaster cry for help?"
 25 Did not I weep for him whose day
 was hard?
 Was not my soul grieved for the
 poor?
 26 But when I looked for good, evil
 came;
 and when I waited for light,
 darkness came.
 27 My heart is in turmoil, and is never
 still;
 days of affliction come to meet me.
 28 I go about blackened, but not by the
 sun;
 I stand up in the assembly, and
 cry for help.
 29 I am a brother of jackals,
 and a companion of ostriches.
- ^h Heb ground yesterday waste ⁱ Heb my feet
^j Cn: Heb helps ^k Cn: Heb like
^l Gk: Heb my garment is disfigured
^m One Heb Ms and Vg: Heb lacks not
ⁿ Cn: Heb obscure

³⁰ My skin turns black and falls from me,
and my bones burn with heat.
³¹ My lyre is turned to mourning,
and my pipe to the voice of those
who weep.

31 "I have made a covenant with my eyes;
how then could I look upon a virgin?

² What would be my portion from God above,
and my heritage from the Almighty on high?

³ Does not calamity befall the unrighteous,
and disaster the workers of iniquity?

⁴ Does not he see my ways,
and number all my steps?

⁵ "If I have walked with falsehood,
and my foot has hastened to deceit;

⁶ (Let me be weighed in a just balance,
and let God know my integrity!)

⁷ if my step has turned aside from the way,
and my heart has gone after my eyes,
and if any spot has cleaved to my hands;

⁸ then let me sow, and another eat;
and let what grows for me be rooted out.

⁹ "If my heart has been enticed to a woman,
and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door;

¹⁰ then let my wife grind for another,
and let others bow down upon her.

¹¹ For that would be a heinous crime;

that would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges;
¹² for that would be a fire which consumes unto Abaddon,
and it would burn to the root all my increase.

¹³ "If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant,
when they brought a complaint against me;

¹⁴ what then shall I do when God rises up?
When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him?

¹⁵ Did not he who made me in the womb make him?
And did not one fashion us in the womb?

¹⁶ "If I have withheld anything that the poor desired,
or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,

¹⁷ or have eaten my morsel alone,
and the fatherless has not eaten of it

¹⁸ (for from his youth I reared him as a father,
and from his mother's womb I guided him^o);

¹⁹ if I have seen any one perish for lack of clothing,

or a poor man without covering;
²⁰ if his loins have not blessed me,
and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

²¹ if I have raised my hand against the fatherless,

because I saw help in the gate;
²² then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder,

and let my arm be broken from its socket.

^o Cn: Heb for from my youth he grew up to me as a father, and from my mother's womb I guided her

31.1-34.38-40: To convince God and men of his innocence, Job reviews his past behavior in the form of sixteen oaths, covering various aspects of religious and moral misdeeds. The poet offers by implication the evidence of a refined ethical consciousness (which has parallels with the Egyptian Book of the Dead, ch. 125). **1:** *A covenant with my eyes* implies a mature form of introspective awareness. *Look upon a virgin*, Job knows the psychology of covetousness (Mt.5.28). **13-15:** Slaves have rights, established by the Creator for all men. **16-23:** A nomadic sense of social responsibility for the total community. **24-28:** Job is con-

²³ For I was in terror of calamity from God,
and I could not have faced his majesty.

²⁴ "If I have made gold my trust,
or called fine gold my confidence;
²⁵ if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great,
or because my hand had gotten much;
²⁶ if I have looked at the sun^p when it shone,
or the moon moving in splendor,
²⁷ and my heart has been secretly enticed,
and my mouth has kissed my hand;
²⁸ this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges,
for I should have been false to God above.

²⁹ "If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him that hated me,
or exulted when evil overtook him
³⁰ (I have not let my mouth sin by asking for his life with a curse);
³¹ if the men of my tent have not said,
'Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?'
³² (the sojourner has not lodged in the street;
I have opened my doors to the wayfarer);
³³ if I have concealed my transgressions from men,^q
by hiding my iniquity in my bosom,

³⁴ because I stood in great fear of the multitude,
and the contempt of families terrified me,
so that I kept silence, and did not go out of doors—
³⁵ Oh, that I had one to hear me!
(Here is my signature! let the Almighty answer me!)
Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary!
³⁶ Surely I would carry it on my shoulder;
I would bind it on me as a crown;
³⁷ I would give him an account of all my steps;
like a prince I would approach him.
³⁸ "If my land has cried out against me,
and its furrows have wept together;
³⁹ if I have eaten its yield without payment,
and caused the death of its owners;
⁴⁰ let thorns grow instead of wheat,
and foul weeds instead of barley."

The words of Job are ended.

32 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. ² Then Eli'hu the son of Bar'achel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became angry. He was angry at Job because he justified himself rather than God; ³ he was angry also at Job's three friends be-

^p Heb the light ^q Cn: Heb like men or like Adam

scious of the spiritual deterioration behind the worship of idols. **26-27:** Nature worship (compare 2 Kg.21.3-5; Jer.44.17-18; Ezek.8.16) is condemned, because it gives man the illusion of being the master of his destiny (v. 28). *My mouth has kissed my hand*, a form of idolatrous worship (compare 1 Kg.19.18). **33:** *I have concealed my transgression from men*; read with note ^q, "like Adam." The poet is haunted by the relevance of the story of the garden of Eden (Gen.3.10). **35-37:** The thought which has dominated the speeches of Job has been his intense desire to see God. The ultimate challenge is hurled at the Deity, but not in a spirit of surrender and humility. *Here is my signature!* Literally, "my taw" (*taw*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, was then in the shape of an X). Job does not fear any *indictment*; he would use it as a symbol of honor (v. 36). **37:** *Like a prince I would approach him*, not as a servant, in the manner of oriental monarchs presenting themselves before their gods and goddesses, but as a noble, unbowed, unshattered hero. Job's self-confidence remains unshaken. **38-40:** A last protest, asserting Job's freedom from corruption of the fields; it may be a subtle allusion to the curse on the soil (compare Gen.3.17-18).

32.1-37.24: Discourses of Elihu. Most commentators believe that these chapters, with their peculiar language (containing many Aramaic words) and different style (the new speaker seems to quote Job's speeches and even the yet-undelivered discourse of the LORD), belong to a

cause they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong. ⁴ Now Eli'hu had waited to speak to Job because they were older than he. ⁵ And when Eli'hu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, he became angry.

⁶ And Eli'hu the son of Bar'achel the Buzite answered:

"I am young in years,
and you are aged;
therefore I was timid and afraid
to declare my opinion to you.

⁷ I said, 'Let days speak,
and many years teach wisdom.'

⁸ But it is the spirit in a man,
the breath of the Almighty, that
makes him understand.

⁹ It is not the old that are wise,
nor the aged that understand what
is right.

¹⁰ Therefore I say, 'Listen to me;
let me also declare my opinion.'

¹¹ "Behold, I waited for your words,
I listened for your wise sayings,
while you searched out what to
say.

¹² I gave you my attention,
and, behold, there was none that
confuted Job,
or that answered his words,
among you.

¹³ Beware lest you say, 'We have
found wisdom;

God may vanquish him, not man.'

¹⁴ He has not directed his words
against me,
and I will not answer him with
your speeches.

¹⁵ "They are discomfited, they answer
no more;
they have not a word to say.

¹⁶ And shall I wait, because they do
not speak,
because they stand there, and
answer no more?

¹⁷ I also will give my answer;
I also will declare my opinion.

¹⁸ For I am full of words,
the spirit within me constrains me.

¹⁹ Behold, my heart is like wine that
has no vent;
like new wineskins, it is ready to
burst.

²⁰ I must speak, that I may find relief;
I must open my lips and answer.

²¹ I will not show partiality to any
person
or use flattery toward any man.

²² For I do not know how to flatter,
else would my Maker soon put an
end to me.

33 "But now, hear my speech, O
Job,
and listen to all my words.

² Behold, I open my mouth;

r Gk Syr Vg: Heb many

later hand than that of the poet. In addition to these internal differences, Job's final challenge (31.35-37) calls for the immediate manifestation of God. Likewise, the epilogue (42.7-17) ignores Elihu, which may indicate that he did not belong to the original cast of characters. Nevertheless, this section of the book presents with genuine depth a series of new ideas: the revelatory function of suffering, the stern nature of the love of God, and a hint of salvation by faith. And Elihu's speeches serve to prepare dramatically, psychologically, and theologically for the intervention of the LORD.

32.1-6: Prose introductions. The repetitions indicate the long process of literary transmission. **2:** The name *Elihu* means, "My God is he," perhaps a symbolic name here (it also occurs in 1 Sam.1.1; 1 Chr.12.20). *Buzite* suggests that Elihu was an Aramean living not far from Edom, for Buz in Gen.22.21 is a brother of Uz (see Job 1.1 n.) and an Aramean (compare Gen.11.26-32), and in Jer.25.23 it is a place name in Edom. **2:** *He justified himself rather than God*, Elihu quite correctly estimates the situation. Job has risen for the defense of man, not God. **3:** There is some evidence that the statement, *they had declared Job to be in the wrong*, originally read, "they had condemned God," an offensive phrase which the scribes corrected in the manuscripts. The silence of the friends after Job's final oath amounts to their assent. **6-22:** Poetic introduction. Spirit, not age, is the source of wisdom. Elihu offers revealed knowledge (v. 8) rather than the voice of human experience and tradition. The ludicrous boastfulness of his introductory remarks may have been introduced as a comical element, to relieve tragic tension.

the tongue in my mouth speaks.
³ My words declare the uprightness
of my heart,
and what my lips know they speak
sincerely.
⁴ The spirit of God has made me,
and the breath of the Almighty
gives me life.
⁵ Answer me, if you can;
set your words in order before me;
take your stand.
⁶ Behold, I am toward God as you are;
I too was formed from a piece of
clay.
⁷ Behold, no fear of me need terrify
you;
my pressure will not be heavy
upon you.
⁸ "Surely, you have spoken in my
hearing,
and I have heard the sound of
your words.
⁹ You say, 'I am clean, without
transgression;
I am pure, and there is no iniquity
in me.
¹⁰ Behold, he finds occasions against
me,
he counts me as his enemy;
¹¹ he puts my feet in the stocks,
and watches all my paths.'
¹² "Behold, in this you are not right. I
will answer you.
God is greater than man.
¹³ Why do you contend against him,
saying, 'He will answer none of
my^s words'?
¹⁴ For God speaks in one way,
and in two, though man does not
perceive it.
¹⁵ In a dream, in a vision of the night,
when deep sleep falls upon men,

while they slumber on their beds,
¹⁶ then he opens the ears of men,
and terrifies them with warnings,
¹⁷ that he may turn man aside from his
deed,
and cut off^t pride from man;
¹⁸ he keeps back his soul from the Pit,
his life from perishing by the
sword.
¹⁹ "Man is also chastened with pain
upon his bed,
and with continual strife in his
bones;
²⁰ so that his life loathes bread,
and his appetite dainty food.
²¹ His flesh is so wasted away that it
cannot be seen;
and his bones which were not seen
stick out.
²² His soul draws near the Pit,
and his life to those who bring
death.
²³ If there be for him an angel,
a mediator, one of the thousand,
to declare to man what is right for
him;
²⁴ and he is gracious to him, and says,
'Deliver him from going down into
the Pit,
I have found a ransom;
²⁵ let his flesh become fresh with
youth;
let him return to the days of his
youthful vigor';
²⁶ then man prays to God, and he
accepts him,
he comes into his presence with
joy.
He recounts^u to men his salvation,
²⁷ and he sings before men, and says:

^s Compare Gk: Heb *his*
^t Cn: Heb *hide*
^u Cn: Heb *returns*

33.1-33: First poem of Elihu. 6: The obscure Hebrew of the first line seems to mean, "Behold I am your equal, not God!" 23-28: Grace is given man, not bought or forced by him. Suffering prepares man to receive the self-disclosure of God. If there is an angel, a mediator (rather, "an intercessor"), who would also *declare to man what is right for him*, then God would be *gracious to him* (v. 24a). Here is a whole theology of salvation by grace in miniature. Man does not save himself by an achievement of his will. The intercessor offers on his behalf a *ransom* (v. 24c). Only as a result of this mediation will man be able to pray to God and to come *into his presence with joy* (v. 26). Afterwards he will testify to other men, for repentance and awareness of sin are not the cause but the result of God's goodness (vv. 27-28).

'I sinned, and perverted what was right,
and it was not requited to me.
28 He has redeemed my soul from going
down into the Pit,
and my life shall see the light.'

29 "Behold, God does all these things,
twice, three times, with a man,
30 to bring back his soul from the Pit,
that he may see the light of life."
31 Give heed, O Job, listen to me;
be silent, and I will speak.
32 If you have anything to say, answer
me;
speak, for I desire to justify you.
33 If not, listen to me;
be silent, and I will teach you
wisdom."

34 Then Eli'hu said:
2 "Hear my words, you wise
men,
and give ear to me, you who know;
3 for the ear tests words
as the palate tastes food.
4 Let us choose what is right;
let us determine among ourselves
what is good.
5 For Job has said, 'I am innocent,
and God has taken away my
right;
6 in spite of my right I am counted a
liar;
my wound is incurable, though I
am without transgression.'
7 What man is like Job,
who drinks up scoffing like water,
8 who goes in company with evildoers
and walks with wicked men?
9 For he has said, 'It profits a man
nothing
that he should take delight in God.'
10 "Therefore, hear me, you men of
understanding,
far be it from God that he should
do wickedness,
and from the Almighty that he
should do wrong.

11 For according to the work of a man
he will requite him,
and according to his ways he will
make it befall him.
12 Of a truth, God will not do wickedly,
and the Almighty will not pervert
justice.
13 Who gave him charge over the earth
and who laid on him" the whole
world?
14 If he should take back his spirit^x to
himself,
and gather to himself his breath,
15 all flesh would perish together,
and man would return to dust.
16 "If you have understanding, hear
this;
listen to what I say.
17 Shall one who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn him who is
righteous and mighty,
18 who says to a king, 'Worthless one,'
and to nobles, 'Wicked man';
19 who shows no partiality to princes,
nor regards the rich more than the
poor,
for they are all the work of his
hands?
20 In a moment they die;
at midnight the people are shaken
and pass away,
and the mighty are taken away by
no human hand.
21 "For his eyes are upon the ways of a
man,
and he sees all his steps.
22 There is no gloom or deep darkness
where evildoers may hide
themselves.
23 For he has not appointed a time^y for
any man
to go before God in judgment.
24 He shatters the mighty without
investigation,
and sets others in their place.
25 Thus, knowing their works,

^v Syr: Heb to be lighted with the light of life

^w Heb lacks on him

^x Heb his heart his spirit

^y Cn: Heb yet

34.1-37: Second poem of Elihu. The ways of God are ultimately just; there is neither evil nor partiality in him. 37: Job's sin is one of theological arrogance.

he overturns them in the night, and they are crushed.
²⁶ He strikes them for their wickedness in the sight of men,
²⁷ because they turned aside from following him, and had no regard for any of his ways,
²⁸ so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to him, and he heard the cry of the afflicted—
²⁹ When he is quiet, who can condemn? When he hides his face, who can behold him, whether it be a nation or a man?—
³⁰ that a godless man should not reign, that he should not ensnare the people.
³¹ “For has any one said to God, ‘I have borne chastisement; I will not offend any more;
³² teach me what I do not see; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more’?
³³ Will he then make requital to suit you, because you reject it?
 For you must choose, and not I; therefore declare what you know.^z
³⁴ Men of understanding will say to me, and the wise man who hears me will say:
³⁵ ‘Job speaks without knowledge, his words are without insight.’
³⁶ Would that Job were tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men.
³⁷ For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands among us, and multiplies his words against God.”

35 And Eli’hu said:
² “Do you think this to be just? Do you say, ‘It is my right before God,’
³ that you ask, ‘What advantage have I?

How am I better off than if I had sinned?”
⁴ I will answer you and your friends with you.
⁵ Look at the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds, which are higher than you.
⁶ If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against him?
 And if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to him?
⁷ If you are righteous, what do you give to him; or what does he receive from your hand?
⁸ Your wickedness concerns a man like yourself, and your righteousness a son of man.
⁹ “Because of the multitude of oppressions people cry out; they call for help because of the arm of the mighty.
¹⁰ But none says, ‘Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night,
¹¹ who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of the air?’
¹² There they cry out, but he does not answer, because of the pride of evil men.
¹³ Surely God does not hear an empty cry, nor does the Almighty regard it.
¹⁴ How much less when you say that you do not see him, that the case is before him, and you are waiting for him!
¹⁵ And now, because his anger does not punish, and he does not greatly heed transgression,^a
¹⁶ Job opens his mouth in empty talk,

^z The Hebrew of verses 29–33 is obscure
^a Theodotion Symmachus Compare Vg: The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

35.1–16: Third poem of Elihu. God is independent of man (vv. 5–8), but his gifts of *songs in the night* (v. 10) show the emptiness of man’s haste in judging divine behavior.

he multiplies words without knowledge."

36 And Elihu continued, and said:
 2 "Bear with me a little, and I

will show you,

for I have yet something to say on
 God's behalf.

3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
 and ascribe righteousness to my
 Maker.

4 For truly my words are not false;
 one who is perfect in knowledge is
 with you.

5 "Behold, God is mighty, and does
 not despise any;
 he is mighty in strength of
 understanding.

6 He does not keep the wicked alive,
 but gives the afflicted their right.

7 He does not withdraw his eyes from
 the righteous,
 but with kings upon the throne
 he sets them for ever, and they are
 exalted.

8 And if they are bound in fetters
 and caught in the cords of
 affliction,

9 then he declares to them their work
 and their transgressions, that they
 are behaving arrogantly.

10 He opens their ears to instruction,
 and commands that they return
 from iniquity.

11 If they hearken and serve him,
 they complete their days in
 prosperity,
 and their years in pleasantness.

12 But if they do not hearken, they
 perish by the sword,
 and die without knowledge.

13 "The godless in heart cherish anger;
 they do not cry for help when he
 binds them.

14 They die in youth,

and their life ends in shame.^b

15 He delivers the afflicted by their
 affliction,

and opens their ear by adversity.

16 He also allured you out of distress
 into a broad place where there was
 no cramping,
 and what was set on your table was
 full of fatness.

17 "But you are full of the judgment on
 the wicked;
 judgment and justice seize you.

18 Beware lest wrath entice you into
 scoffing;
 and let not the greatness of the
 ransom turn you aside.

19 Will your cry avail to keep you from
 distress,
 or all the force of your strength?

20 Do not long for the night,
 when peoples are cut off in their
 place.

21 Take heed, do not turn to iniquity,
 for this you have chosen rather
 than affliction.

22 Behold, God is exalted in his power;
 who is a teacher like him?

23 Who has prescribed for him his way,
 or who can say, 'Thou hast done
 wrong'?

24 "Remember to extol his work,
 of which men have sung.

25 All men have looked on it;
 man beholds it from afar.

26 Behold, God is great, and we know
 him not;
 the number of his years is
 unsearchable.

27 For he draws up the drops of water,
 he^c distils his mist in rain

28 which the skies pour down,
 and drop upon man abundantly.

^b Heb among the cult prostitutes

^c Cn: Heb they distil

36.1-25: Fourth poem of Elihu. Since affliction always has a purpose (vv. 5-15), let Job beware, and instead of moaning over his fate, may he contemplate the hidden mercy of the upholder of nature and give praise as he participates in the work of God (vv. 16-25).

36.26-37.22: Fifth poem of Elihu. Although without the usual introduction, this may be taken as a separate poem of Elihu. The sovereign ruler of nature, his purpose and his benevolence appeared in the majestic unfolding of the seasons, autumn (vv. 26-33), winter (37.1-13)

- ²⁹ Can any one understand the
spreading of the clouds,
the thunderings of his pavilion?
³⁰ Behold, he scatters his lightning
about him,
and covers the roots of the sea.
³¹ For by these he judges peoples;
he gives food in abundance.
³² He covers his hands with the
lightning,
and commands it to strike the
mark.
³³ Its crashing declares concerning him,
who is jealous with anger against
iniquity.
- 37** "At this also my heart trembles,
and leaps out of its place.
² Hearken to the thunder of his voice
and the rumbling that comes from
his mouth.
³ Under the whole heaven he lets it go,
and his lightning to the corners of
the earth.
⁴ After it his voice roars;
he thunders with his majestic
voice
and he does not restrain the
lightnings^d when his voice is
heard.
⁵ God thunders wondrously with his
voice;
he does great things which we
cannot comprehend.
⁶ For to the snow he says, 'Fall on the
earth';
and to the shower and the rain,^e
'Be strong.'
⁷ He seals up the hand of every man,
that all men may know his work.^f
⁸ Then the beasts go into their lairs,
and remain in their dens.
⁹ From its chamber comes the
whirlwind,
and cold from the scattering winds.
¹⁰ By the breath of God ice is given,
and the broad waters are frozen
fast.
¹¹ He loads the thick cloud with
moisture;

- the clouds scatter his lightning.
¹² They turn round and round by his
guidance,
to accomplish all that he
commands them
on the face of the habitable world.
¹³ Whether for correction, or for his
land,
or for love, he causes it to happen.
- ¹⁴ "Hear this, O Job;
stop and consider the wondrous
works of God.
¹⁵ Do you know how God lays his
command upon them,
and causes the lightning of his
cloud to shine?
¹⁶ Do you know the balancings of the
clouds,
the wondrous works of him who is
perfect in knowledge,
¹⁷ you whose garments are hot
when the earth is still because of
the south wind?
¹⁸ Can you, like him, spread out the
skies,
hard as a molten mirror?
¹⁹ Teach us what we shall say to him;
we cannot draw up our case
because of darkness.
²⁰ Shall it be told him that I would
speak?
Did a man ever wish that he would
be swallowed up?
- ²¹ "And now men cannot look on the
light
when it is bright in the skies,
when the wind has passed and
cleared them.
²² Out of the north comes golden
splendor;
God is clothed with terrible
majesty.
²³ The Almighty—we cannot find him;
he is great in power and justice,

^d Heb *them*

^e Cn Compare Syr: Heb *shower of rain and shower of rains*

^f Vg Compare Syr Tg: Heb *that all men whom he has made may know it*

and summer (vv. 14–22); a sequence which points to an autumnal calendar, with the new year's festival in the fall.

37.23–24: Final admonition of Elihu. Let Job recognize that although God is far beyond

- and abundant righteousness he will not violate.
- ²⁴ Therefore men fear him; he does not regard any who are wise in their own conceit."
- 38** Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:
- ² "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
- ³ Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me.
- ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.
- ⁵ Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?
- ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone,
- ⁷ when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
- ⁸ "Or who shut in the sea with doors, when it burst forth from the womb;
- ⁹ when I made clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band,
- ¹⁰ and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors,
- ¹¹ and said, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed?"
- ¹² "Have you commanded the morning since your days began,

- and caused the dawn to know its place,
- ¹³ that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?
- ¹⁴ It is changed like clay under the seal, and it is dyed^g like a garment.
- ¹⁵ From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken.
- ¹⁶ "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep?
- ¹⁷ Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?
- ¹⁸ Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this.
- ¹⁹ "Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness,
- ²⁰ that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home?
- ²¹ You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!
- ²² "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
- ²³ which I have reserved for the time of trouble,

^g Cn: Heb *they stand forth*

man's knowledge or imagination, *abundant righteousness he will not violate*. Human wisdom cannot be a substitute for the fear of God.

38.1–42.6: The voice from the whirlwind. Many commentators used to consider these chapters to be editorial additions. Contemporary scholarship points out their linguistic and literary homogeneity with the main body of the poem.

38.1–40.5: First discourse of the LORD. **38.1:** *The whirlwind*, a frequent setting of theophanies, i.e. divine appearances (Nah.1.3; Zech.9.14; Pss.18.7–15; 50.3; Ezek.1.4; Hab. ch. 3). **2–3:** *Like a man*. Throughout the discussion Job has asked why misfortune happened to him, a man. The Deity now offers such a man the right to challenge the divine rule. **4–7:** The creator of the earth. There is here no trace of a dualistic cosmogony with a cosmic fight (compare 3.8 n.; 7.12 n.; 26.10–13). **8–11:** The creator of the sea. **12–15:** The creator of time. **16–28:** The master of the deep, light and darkness, snow, hail, and lightning, constellations, clouds and mist.

for the day of battle and war?
²⁴ What is the way to the place where
 the light is distributed,
 or where the east wind is scattered
 upon the earth?

²⁵ "Who has cleft a channel for the
 torrents of rain,
 and a way for the thunderbolt,
²⁶ to bring rain on a land where no man
 is,
 on the desert in which there is no
 man;
²⁷ to satisfy the waste and desolate land,
 and to make the ground put forth
 grass?

²⁸ "Has the rain a father,
 or who has begotten the drops of
 dew?
²⁹ From whose womb did the ice come
 forth,
 and who has given birth to the
 hoarfrost of heaven?
³⁰ The waters become hard like stone,
 and the face of the deep is frozen.

³¹ "Can you bind the chains of the
 Plei'ades,
 or loose the cords of Orion?
³² Can you lead forth the Maz'zarothe
 in their season,
 or can you guide the Bear with its
 children?
³³ Do you know the ordinances of the
 heavens?
 Can you establish their rule on the
 earth?

³⁴ "Can you lift up your voice to the
 clouds,
 that a flood of waters may cover
 you?
³⁵ Can you send forth lightnings, that
 they may go
 and say to you, 'Here we are'?
³⁶ Who has put wisdom in the clouds,^h
 or given understanding to the
 mists?^h
³⁷ Who can number the clouds by
 wisdom?

Or who can tilt the waterskins of
 the heavens,
³⁸ when the dust runs into a mass
 and the clods cleave fast together?

³⁹ "Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
 or satisfy the appetite of the young
 lions,
⁴⁰ when they crouch in their dens,
 or lie in wait in their covert?
⁴¹ Who provides for the raven its prey,
 when its young ones cry to God,
 and wander about for lack of food?

39 "Do you know when the
 mountain goats bring forth?
 Do you observe the calving of the
 hinds?

² Can you number the months that
 they fulfil,
 and do you know the time when
 they bring forth,
³ when they crouch, bring forth their
 offspring,
 and are delivered of their young?
⁴ Their young ones become strong,
 they grow up in the open;
 they go forth, and do not return
 to them.

⁵ "Who has let the wild ass go free?
 Who has loosed the bonds of the
 swift ass,

⁶ to whom I have given the steppe for
 his home,
 and the salt land for his dwelling
 place?

⁷ He scorns the tumult of the city;
 he hears not the shouts of the
 driver.

⁸ He ranges the mountains as his
 pasture,
 and he searches after every green
 thing.

⁹ "Is the wild ox willing to serve you?
 Will he spend the night at your
 crib?

¹⁰ Can you bind him in the furrow
 with ropes,

^h The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

- or will he harrow the valleys after you?
- ¹¹ Will you depend on him because his strength is great,
and will you leave to him your labor?
- ¹² Do you have faith in him that he will return,
and bring your grain to your threshing floor?ⁱ
- ¹³ "The wings of the ostrich wave proudly;
but are they the pinions and plumage of love?^j
- ¹⁴ For she leaves her eggs to the earth,
and lets them be warmed on the ground,
- ¹⁵ forgetting that a foot may crush them,
and that the wild beast may trample them.
- ¹⁶ She deals cruelly with her young, as if they were not hers;
though her labor be in vain, yet she has no fear;
- ¹⁷ because God has made her forget wisdom,
and given her no share in understanding.
- ¹⁸ When she rouses herself to flee,^k
she laughs at the horse and his rider.
- ¹⁹ "Do you give the horse his might?
Do you clothe his neck with strength?^l
- ²⁰ Do you make him leap like the locust?
His majestic snorting is terrible.
- ²¹ He paws^m in the valley, and exults in his strength;
he goes out to meet the weapons.
- ²² He laughs at fear, and is not dismayed;
he does not turn back from the sword.
- ²³ Upon him rattle the quiver,
the flashing spear and the javelin.
- ²⁴ With fierceness and rage he swallows the ground;
he cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet.
- ²⁵ When the trumpet sounds, he says 'Aha!'
He smells the battle from afar,
the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.
- ²⁶ "Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars,
and spreads his wings toward the south?
- ²⁷ Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up
and makes his nest on high?
- ²⁸ On the rock he dwells and makes his home
in the fastness of the rocky crag.
- ²⁹ Thence he spies out the prey;
his eyes behold it afar off.
- ³⁰ His young ones suck up blood;
and where the slain are, there is he."
- 40** And the LORD said to Job:
² "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?
He who argues with God, let him answer it."
- ³ Then Job answered the LORD:
- ⁴ "Behold, I am of small account;
what shall I answer thee?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
- ⁵ I have spoken once, and I will not answer;
twice, but I will proceed no further."
- ⁶ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:
- ⁷ "Gird up your loins like a man;
I will question you, and you declare to me.

ⁱ Heb your grain and your threshing floor

^j Heb obscure ^k Heb obscure

^l Tg: The meaning of the Hebrew word is obscure

^m Gk Syr Vg: Heb they dig

40.1-5: Job submits and keeps silent. **1:** *Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?* Read, with some ancient versions, "Will he who disputes with the Almighty yield?" The Deity never condemns Job for moral faults but clearly implies that he has been guilty of theological insolence.

- ⁸ Will you even put me in the wrong?
Will you condemn me that you
may be justified?
- ⁹ Have you an arm like God,
and can you thunder with a voice
like his?
- ¹⁰ "Deck yourself with majesty and
dignity;
clothe yourself with glory and
splendor.
- ¹¹ Pour forth the overflowings of your
anger,
and look on every one that is
proud, and abase him.
- ¹² Look on every one that is proud,
and bring him low;
and tread down the wicked where
they stand.
- ¹³ Hide them all in the dust together;
bind their faces in the world
below."
- ¹⁴ Then will I also acknowledge to
you,
that your own right hand can give
you victory.
- ¹⁵ "Behold, Be'hemoth,^o
which I made as I made you;
he eats grass like an ox.
- ¹⁶ Behold, his strength in his loins,
and his power in the muscles of
his belly.
- ¹⁷ He makes his tail stiff like a cedar;
the sinews of his thighs are knit
together.
- ¹⁸ His bones are tubes of bronze,
his limbs like bars of iron.
- ¹⁹ "He is the first of the works^p of God;
let him who made him bring near
his sword!
- ²⁰ For the mountains yield food for
him
where all the wild beasts play.
- ²¹ Under the lotus plants he lies,
in the covert of the reeds and in
the marsh.
- ²² For his shade the lotus trees cover
him;
the willows of the brook
surround him.
- ²³ Behold, if the river is turbulent he is
not frightened;
he is confident though Jordan
rushes against his mouth.
- ²⁴ Can one take him with hooks,^q
or pierce his nose with a snare?
- 41** ^r "Can you draw out Levi'athan^s
with a fishhook,
or press down his tongue with a
cord?
- ² Can you put a rope in his nose,
or pierce his jaw with a hook?
- ³ Will he make many supplications to
you?
Will he speak to you soft words?
- ⁴ Will he make a covenant with you
to take him for your servant for
ever?
- ⁵ Will you play with him as with a
bird,
or will you put him on leash for
your maidens?
- ⁶ Will traders bargain over him?
Will they divide him up among the
merchants?
- ⁷ Can you fill his skin with harpoons,
or his head with fishing spears?
- ⁸ Lay hands on him;
think of the battle; you will not do
it again!

n Heb hidden place

p Heb ways

r Ch 40.25 in Heb

o Or the hippopotamus

q Cn: Heb in his eyes

s Or the crocodile

40.6-41.34: Second discourse of the LORD. 40.6-9: The divine challenge of man is renewed, apparently because Job is only silenced but not convinced. **8:** *Will you condemn me that you may be justified?* The poet indicates here the central theme of the work. Self-righteousness leads man to condemn God. **15-24:** This portrait of *Behemoth* (like that of *Leviathan*, 41.1-34) may have received literary amplification, but it plays an integral part of the poet's purpose: the creating God is in control of all forces of evil, despite appearances to the contrary. **15:** The primeval monster (compare v. 19) is not a mere hippopotamus, but a mythical symbol. *Which I made as I made you*, the mystery of evil is not dissolved, but the divine sway embraces all. **41.1-34:** *Leviathan*, not an ordinary crocodile, but the sea-monster (3.8; 26.13; Ps.74.14), which was associated with chaos. Like the psalmist (Ps.104.26), the poet shows that it is only a plaything in the eyes of God.

- ^{9t} Behold, the hope of a man is disappointed;
he is laid low even at the sight of him.
- ¹⁰ No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him up.
Who then is he that can stand before me?
- ¹¹ Who has given to me,^u that I should repay him?
Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.
- ¹² "I will not keep silence concerning his limbs,
or his mighty strength, or his goodly frame.
- ¹³ Who can strip off his outer garment?
Who can penetrate his double coat of mail?^v
- ¹⁴ Who can open the doors of his face?
Round about his teeth is terror.
- ¹⁵ His back^w is made of rows of shields,
shut up closely as with a seal.
- ¹⁶ One is so near to another
that no air can come between them.
- ¹⁷ They are joined one to another;
they clasp each other and cannot be separated.
- ¹⁸ His sneezings flash forth light,
and his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.
- ¹⁹ Out of his mouth go flaming torches;
sparks of fire leap forth.
- ²⁰ Out of his nostrils comes forth smoke,
as from a boiling pot and burning rushes.
- ²¹ His breath kindles coals,
and a flame comes forth from his mouth.
- ²² In his neck abides strength,
and terror dances before him.
- ²³ The folds of his flesh cleave together,
firmly cast upon him and immovable.
- ²⁴ His heart is hard as a stone,
- hard as the nether millstone.
- ²⁵ When he raises himself up the mighty^x are afraid;
at the crashing they are beside themselves.
- ²⁶ Though the sword reaches him, it does not avail;
nor the spear, the dart, or the javelin.
- ²⁷ He counts iron as straw,
and bronze as rotten wood.
- ²⁸ The arrow cannot make him flee;
for him slingstones are turned to stubble.
- ²⁹ Clubs are counted as stubble;
he laughs at the rattle of javelins.
- ³⁰ His underparts are like sharp potsherds;
he spreads himself like a threshing sledge on the mire.
- ³¹ He makes the deep boil like a pot;
he makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
- ³² Behind him he leaves a shining wake;
one would think the deep to be hoary.
- ³³ Upon earth there is not his like,
a creature without fear.
- ³⁴ He beholds everything that is high;
he is king over all the sons of pride."
- 42** Then Job answered the LORD:
² "I know that thou canst do all things,
and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted.
- ³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
- ⁴ 'Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you declare to me.'

^t Ch 41.1 in Heb^u The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain^v Gk: Heb *bridle*^w Cn Compare Gk Vg: Heb *pride* ^x Or *gods*

42.1-6: The answer of Job. Having contemplated divine activity, the sufferer now knows the purposefulness of God (v. 2). **3a:** A quotation from 38.2; Job acknowledges his finitude. **4:** An echo of the divine questioning (40.7), preparing for the confession of the following lines. **5:** The contrast between belief through tradition and faith through prophetic vision. God has

⁵ I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees thee;
⁶ therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes."

7 After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eli'phaz the Te'manite: "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. ⁸ Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." ⁹ So Eli'phaz the Te'manite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Na'amathite went and did what the LORD had told them; and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

10 And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends; and the LORD gave Job

twice as much as he had before. ¹¹ Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house; and they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money" and a ring of gold. ¹² And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. ¹³ He had also seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴ And he called the name of the first Jemi'mah; and the name of the second Kezi'ah; and the name of the third Ker'en-hap'puch. ¹⁵ And in all the land there were no women so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. ¹⁶ And after this Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. ¹⁷ And Job died, an old man, and full of days.

y Heb qesitah

not justified Job, but he has come to him personally; the upholder of the universe cares for a lonely man so deeply that he offers him the fulness of his communion. Job is not vindicated but he has obtained far more than a recognition of his innocence: he has been accepted by the ever-present master-worker, and intimacy with the Creator makes vindication superfluous. The philosophical problem is not solved, but it is transfigured by the theological reality of the divine-human rapport. **6:** *I despise myself*; the Hebrew verb is obscure, but is probably related to a root meaning "to melt into nothing." *I repent*, the Hebrew verb used here is not the usual one for repentance of sins, but a word expressing the utmost grief and self-depreciation. Such an experience follows rather than precedes the vision of God.

42.7-17: The epilogue. The style, language, and situation of the folktale (1.1-2.13) reappear abruptly (see Introduction). **8:** *Burnt offering*, sacrificial ritual, absent from the poem, is a characteristic of the archaic story (1.5). **10:** Job's restoration follows not his repentance but his intercession on behalf of his friends (v. 8). Intercessory power is a feature which is in accord with the figure of the ancient legend (Ezek.14.14,20). **10-17:** Job receives a double restitution, although no healing of his disease is explicitly mentioned. **11:** *A piece of money*, a qesitah (see note y and Gen.33.19; Jos.24.32). **14:** The names of Job's new daughters have a flavor of folklore: *Jemimah*, Dove; *Keziah*, Cinnamon; *Keren-happuch*, Horn of eye-paint. **15b:** An exceptional procedure (contrast Num.27.1-11). **16-17:** A patriarchal theme (Gen.25.8; 35.29; 50.23; see also Ps.128.6; Pr.17.6; 1 Chr.29.28).

THE PSALMS

The living spirit of any religion shines through most clearly in its hymns. The Psalter is the hymnal of ancient Israel, compiled from older collections of lyrics for use in the temple of Zerubbabel (Ezra 5.2; Hag.1.14). Most of the psalms were probably composed to accompany acts of worship in the temple and may be classified as follows: *Hymns* (acts of praise suitable for any occasion and including the sub-types *Enthronement Hymns*, celebrating the Lord's kingship, and *Songs of Zion*, expressing devotion to the Holy City); *Laments* (in which an individual seeks deliverance from illness or false accusation, or the nation asks for help in time of distress); *Songs of Trust* (in which an individual expresses his confidence in God's readiness to help); *Thanksgivings* (in which an individual expresses his gratitude for deliverance); *Sacred History* (in which the nation recounts the story of God's dealings with it); *Royal Psalms* (designed to be used for occasions such as a coronation or royal wedding); *Wisdom Psalms* (which are meditations on life and the ways of God); and *Liturgies* (which are often of mixed type and were composed for some special cultic or historical occasion). In imitation of the Pentateuch the Psalter is divided into five books (see 41.13 n.)

The titles or superscriptions of the psalms contain a variety of items. They frequently include musical directions, such as "To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments" (Pss. 4; 6; etc.). The meaning of a number of technical terms is no longer definitely known; for example, Shiggaion (Ps. 7), Mikram (Pss. 16; 56-60), Maskil (Pss. 42; 44; 52-55; etc.), Sheminith (Pss. 6; 12), Gittith (Pss. 8; 81; 84), Muth-Labben (Ps. 9), Alamothe (Ps. 46), Mahalath (Ps. 53), Mahalath Leannoth (Ps. 88), Shushan-Eduth (Ps. 60). The first three may refer to types of psalms, and the rest, preceded by "According to," may be the names of tunes, as also The Hind of the Dawn (Ps. 22), Lilies (Pss. 45; 69), The Dove on the Far-off Terebinths (Ps. 56), and Do Not Destroy (Pss. 57-59; 75). References to the Sons of Korah (Pss. 42; 44-49; 84; etc.), Jeduthun (Pss. 39; 62; 77), Asaph (Pss. 50; 73-83), Heman (Ps. 88), and Ethan (Ps. 89) point to the work of professional Levitical musicians (1 Chr.15.16-22; Neh.12.41-46). Song of Ascents (Pss. 120-134) may mean "pilgrim song," that is, of ascent to Jerusalem. The ascription of nearly half of the psalms to David is testimony to the regard in which the great singer of Israel was held (2 Sam.23.1). For the significance of the frequently recurring word, "Selah," see 3.2 n.

The book of Psalms reflects many aspects of the religious experience of Israel. Its intrinsic spiritual depth and beauty have made it from earliest times a treasury of resources for public and private devotion.

BOOK I

|| Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of
the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
² but his delight is in the law of the
LORD,
and on his law he meditates day
and night.
³ He is like a tree

planted by streams of water,
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

⁴ The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff which the wind
drives away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand
in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of
the righteous;

Ps. 1: The contrasting fate of the righteous and the wicked (a wisdom psalm). Compare Jer.17.5-8. 1-3: The prosperity of the righteous. 1: *Blessed* is the conventional translation of a Hebrew expression meaning literally "O how happy . . . !" 2: Compare Ps. 119. 4-6: The disastrous end of the wicked. 4: In threshing, the crushed sheaves were tossed into the air, where the wind blew away the lighter *chaff*.

⁶ for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

2 Why do the nations conspire,
and the peoples plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and his anointed, saying,

³ "Let us burst their bonds asunder,
and cast their cords from us."

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the LORD has them in derision.

⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,

⁶ "I have set my king
on Zion, my holy hill."

⁷ I will tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to me, "You are my son,
today I have begotten you.

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron,
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
with trembling ¹² kiss his feet,^a

lest he be angry, and you perish in the way;
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

3 O LORD, how many are my foes!
Many are rising against me;

² many are saying of me,
there is no help for him in God.

Selah

³ But thou, O LORD, art a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter of my head.

⁴ I cry aloud to the LORD,
and he answers me from his holy hill.
Selah

⁵ I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, for the LORD sustains me.

⁶ I am not afraid of ten thousands of people
who have set themselves against me round about.

⁷ Arise, O LORD!
Deliver me, O my God!
For thou dost smite all my enemies
on the cheek,
thou dost break the teeth of the wicked.

^a Ca: The Hebrew of 11b and 12a is uncertain

Ps. 2: The LORD gives universal dominion to his king (a royal psalm, composed for a coronation). **1-3:** Israel's subject peoples plot rebellion against the new king. **2:** The word *anointed* in Hebrew is literally "messiah," one of the titles of an Israelite king; after the extinction of the Hebrew monarchy, this became a name for the ideal king of a future, hoped-for restoration, and the psalm was reinterpreted accordingly (compare Acts 4.25-29). **4-9:** The newly enthroned king quotes God's promise of universal rule. **7:** *You are my son . . . begotten you*, a formula of adoption whereby the king became God's son (compare 2 Sam.7.14; Ps.89.26-27; also Acts 13.33). **10-12:** Rebellious rulers are warned to submit.

Ps. 3: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-2:** The psalmist's complaint. **2:** *Selah* is a liturgical direction; it may indicate that there should be an instrumental interlude at this point in the singing of the psalm. **3-4:** Expression of trust, a regular element in psalms which are laments. **5-6:** It is perhaps after having spent the night in the temple that the psalmist receives assurance that the LORD is still on his side. **7-8:** Concluding prayer for the psalmist and the nation.

⁸ Deliverance belongs to the LORD;
thy blessing be upon thy people!
Selah

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

4 Answer me when I call, O God of my right!
Thou hast given me room when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

² O men, how long shall my honor suffer shame?
How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? *Selah*

³ But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

⁴ Be angry, but sin not;
commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*

⁵ Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the LORD.

⁶ There are many who say, "O that we might see some good!
Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, O LORD!"

⁷ Thou hast put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and wine abound.

⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for thou alone, O LORD, makest me dwell in safety.

To the choirmaster: for the flutes. A Psalm of David.

5 Give ear to my words, O LORD;
give heed to my groaning.

² Hearken to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to thee do I pray.

³ O LORD, in the morning thou dost hear my voice;
in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for thee, and watch.

⁴ For thou art not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil may not sojourn with thee.

⁵ The boastful may not stand before thy eyes;
thou hatest all evildoers.

⁶ Thou destroyest those who speak lies;
the LORD abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men.

⁷ But I through the abundance of thy steadfast love
will enter thy house,
I will worship toward thy holy temple
in the fear of thee.

⁸ Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness
because of my enemies;
make thy way straight before me.

⁹ For there is no truth in their mouth;
their heart is destruction,
their throat is an open sepulchre,
they flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰ Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;

Ps. 4: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1:** Cry for help. **2-4:** The psalmist rebukes those who falsely accuse him of wrong-doing. The charge is probably a formal accusation to which the accused replies by publicly protesting his innocence (compare 26.4-7). **2,4:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **5-8:** He is assured of the LORD's help. The ceremony in which this psalm was used evidently included sacrifice (v. 5) and possibly spending the night in the temple (v. 8; compare 3.5).

Ps. 5: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-2:** Cry for help. **3-7:** Expression of trust (compare 3.3-4). **3:** *In the morning . . . a sacrifice* probably refers to a ceremony at the end of a night's vigil (compare 3.5; 4.8). **8-12:** Concluding prayer. **9-10:** See 4.2-4 n.

- because of their many transgressions
cast them out,
for they have rebelled against
thee.
- ¹¹ But let all who take refuge in thee
rejoice,
let them ever sing for joy;
and do thou defend them,
that those who love thy name may
exult in thee.
- ¹² For thou dost bless the righteous,
O LORD;
thou dost cover him with favor as
with a shield.
- ⁷ My eye wastes away because of
grief,
it grows weak because of all my
foes.
- ⁸ Depart from me, all you workers of
evil;
for the LORD has heard the sound
of my weeping.
- ⁹ The LORD has heard my
supplication;
the LORD accepts my prayer.
- ¹⁰ All my enemies shall be ashamed and
sorely troubled;
they shall turn back, and be put to
shame in a moment.

To the choirmaster: with stringed in-
struments; according to The Sheminith.
A Psalm of David.

A Shiggaion of David, which he sang to
the LORD concerning Cush a
Benjaminite.

- 6** O LORD, rebuke me not in thy
anger,
nor chasten me in thy wrath.
² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I
am languishing;
O LORD, heal me, for my bones
are troubled.
³ My soul also is sorely troubled.
But thou, O LORD—how long?
- ⁴ Turn, O LORD, save my life;
deliver me for the sake of thy
steadfast love.
- ⁵ For in death there is no
remembrance of thee;
in Sheol who can give thee praise?
- ⁶ I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my bed with
tears;
I drench my couch with my
weeping.
- 7** O LORD my God, in thee do I take
refuge;
save me from all my pursuers, and
deliver me,
² lest like a lion they rend me,
dragging me away, with none to
rescue.
- ³ O LORD my God, if I have done this,
if there is wrong in my hands,
⁴ if I have requited my friend with evil
or plundered my enemy without
cause,
⁵ let the enemy pursue me and
overtake me,
and let him trample my life to the
ground,
and lay my soul in the dust. *Selah*
- ⁶ Arise, O LORD, in thy anger,
lift thyself up against the fury of
my enemies;

Ps. 6: Prayer for healing from severe illness (a lament). In the church liturgy this is the first of seven Penitential Psalms (6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143). **1-5:** Cry for help. **5:** *Sheol*, the place of the dead, where men retain only the faintest semblance of life (compare 88.5-6; Job 3.13-19; see Gen.37.35 n.). **6-7:** The psalmist's weakened condition. **8-10:** He receives assurance that his prayer is heard. **8:** He blames his enemies for his illness, perhaps believing that they have put a curse upon him (compare 102.3-8).

Ps. 7: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-2:** Cry for help. **3-5:** Pro-
testation of innocence (see 4.2-4 n.). **3:** *This*, the specific crime of which the psalmist was
accused. **5:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **6-9:** Prayer for God's intervention in his trial.

awake, O my God;^b thou hast
appointed a judgment.

⁷ Let the assembly of the peoples be
gathered about thee;
and over it take thy seat^c on high.

⁸ The LORD judges the peoples;
judge me, O LORD, according to
my righteousness
and according to the integrity that
is in me.

⁹ O let the evil of the wicked come to
an end,
but establish thou the righteous,
thou who triest the minds and hearts,
thou righteous God.

¹⁰ My shield is with God,
who saves the upright in heart.

¹¹ God is a righteous judge,
and a God who has indignation
every day.

¹² If a man^d does not repent, God^d
will whet his sword;

he has bent and strung his bow;

¹³ he has prepared his deadly weapons,
making his arrows fiery shafts.

¹⁴ Behold, the wicked man conceives
evil,
and is pregnant with mischief,
and brings forth lies.

¹⁵ He makes a pit, digging it out,
and falls into the hole which he
has made.

¹⁶ His mischief returns upon his own
head,
and on his own pate his violence
descends.

¹⁷ I will give to the LORD the thanks
due to his righteousness,
and I will sing praise to the name
of the LORD, the Most High.

To the choirmaster: according to The
Gittith. A Psalm of David.

8 O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is thy name in all
the earth!

Thou whose glory above the heavens
is chanted

² by the mouth of babes and
infants,
thou hast founded a bulwark
because of thy foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.

³ When I look at thy heavens, the
work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars which thou
hast established;

⁴ what is man that thou art mindful of
him,
and the son of man that thou dost
care for him?

⁵ Yet thou hast made him little less
than God,
and dost crown him with glory
and honor.

⁶ Thou hast given him dominion over
the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his
feet,

⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,

⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of
the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of
the sea.

⁹ O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is thy name in all
the earth!

b Or for me c Cn: Heb return d Heb he

10-16: Expression of trust in God's righteous dealing (compare 3.3-4). **17:** The psalmist promises to give formal thanks to God, probably by offering a thanksgiving sacrifice (compare 66.13-15).

Ps. 8: Hymn celebrating God's glory and man's God-given dignity. 1-4: The glory of God as manifest in the night sky and in the songs of children. **4:** See 144.3-4; Job 7.17-18 n. *Son of man* means "individual man." **5-8:** God has given man a share in his own dignity by conferring on him dominion over the rest of creation (Gen.1.26). **9:** The opening verse repeated as a refrain.

Pss. 9-10: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). This composition, which

To the choirmaster: according to
Muth-labben. A Psalm of David.

9 I will give thanks to the LORD with
my whole heart;
I will tell of all thy wonderful
deeds.

2 I will be glad and exult in thee,
I will sing praise to thy name, O
Most High.

3 When my enemies turned back,
they stumbled and perished
before thee.

4 For thou hast maintained my just
cause;
thou hast sat on the throne giving
righteous judgment.

5 Thou hast rebuked the nations, thou
hast destroyed the wicked;
thou hast blotted out their name
for ever and ever.

6 The enemy have vanished in
everlasting ruins;
their cities thou hast rooted out;
the very memory of them has
perished.

7 But the LORD sits enthroned for
ever,
he has established his throne for
judgment;

8 and he judges the world with
righteousness,
he judges the peoples with equity.

9 The LORD is a stronghold for the
oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

10 And those who know thy name put
their trust in thee,
for thou, O LORD, hast not
forsaken those who seek thee.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, who
dwells in Zion!

Tell among the peoples his deeds!

12 For he who avenges blood is
mindful of them;
he does not forget the cry of the
afflicted.

13 Be gracious to me, O LORD!
Behold what I suffer from those
who hate me,
O thou who liftest me up from the
gates of death,

14 that I may recount all thy praises,
that in the gates of the daughter
of Zion
I may rejoice in thy deliverance.

15 The nations have sunk in the pit
which they made;
in the net which they hid has their
own foot been caught.

16 The LORD has made himself known,
he has executed judgment;
the wicked are snared in the work
of their own hands.

Higgaion. Selah

17 The wicked shall depart to Sheol,
all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not always be
forgotten,
and the hope of the poor shall not
perish for ever.

19 Arise, O LORD! Let not man prevail;
let the nations be judged before
thee!

20 Put them in fear, O LORD!
Let the nations know that they are
but men! *Selah*

10 Why dost thou stand afar off,
O LORD?

Why dost thou hide thyself in
times of trouble?

2 In arrogance the wicked hotly
pursue the poor;

is printed as a single psalm in the Septuagint, is constructed on the acrostic principle, every second verse beginning with a different successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, a circumstance which helps to account for the seeming lack of logical sequence. 1-2: A vow in anticipation of deliverance (see 7.17 n.). 3-12: Expression of confidence, based on God's previous just dealings (compare 3.3-4). 13-14: The psalmist's situation. 15-18: Renewed expression of confidence. 15: *The nations*, the psalmist's enemies. 16: The meaning of *Higgaion* is unknown. *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 17: *Sheol*, see 6.5 n. 9.19-10.13: Prayer that God may intervene against the

let them be caught in the schemes
which they have devised.

³ For the wicked boasts of the desires
of his heart,
and the man greedy for gain
curses and renounces the
LORD.

⁴ In the pride of his countenance the
wicked does not seek him;
all his thoughts are, "There is no
God."

⁵ His ways prosper at all times;
thy judgments are on high, out of
his sight;
as for all his foes, he puffs at
them.

⁶ He thinks in his heart, "I shall not
be moved;
throughout all generations I shall
not meet adversity."

⁷ His mouth is filled with cursing and
deceit and oppression;
under his tongue are mischief and
iniquity.

⁸ He sits in ambush in the villages;
in hiding places he murders the
innocent.

His eyes stealthily watch for the
hapless,

⁹ he lurks in secret like a lion in his
covert;
he lurks that he may seize the poor,
he seizes the poor when he draws
him into his net.

¹⁰ The hapless is crushed, sinks down,
and falls by his might.

¹¹ He thinks in his heart, "God has
forgotten,
he has hidden his face, he will
never see it."

¹² Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thy
hand;

Prayer for deliverance from the wicked

forget not the afflicted.

¹³ Why does the wicked renounce
God,
and say in his heart, "Thou wilt
not call to account"?

¹⁴ Thou dost see; yea, thou dost note
trouble and vexation,
that thou mayst take it into thy
hands;
the hapless commits himself to thee;
thou hast been the helper of the
fatherless.

¹⁵ Break thou the arm of the wicked
and evildoer;
seek out his wickedness till thou
find none.

¹⁶ The LORD is king for ever and ever;
the nations shall perish from his
land.

¹⁷ O LORD, thou wilt hear the desire of
the meek;
thou wilt strengthen their heart,
thou wilt incline thy ear
¹⁸ to do justice to the fatherless and
the oppressed,
so that man who is of the earth
may strike terror no more.

To the choirmaster. Of David.

||| In the LORD I take refuge;
how can you say to me,
"Flee like a bird to the
mountains;"^e

² for lo, the wicked bend the bow,
they have fitted their arrow to the
string,
to shoot in the dark at the upright
in heart;

³ if the foundations are destroyed,
what can the righteous do"?

^e Gk Syr Jerome Tg: Heb *flee to your mountain, O bird*

wicked. **10.3-11:** The greedy, haughty, irreligious, and tyrannical spirit of the psalmist's enemies. **4:** They are not atheists, but they deny that God is concerned with moral retribution (compare v. 11 and 94.7). **16-18:** Concluding expression of confidence.

Ps. 11: Confidence in God's concern for justice. This type of psalm (the song of trust) probably developed as an expansion of the expression of trust which is a common feature of the laments (see 3.3-4 n.; compare 5.3-7; 7.10-16; 9.3-12). **1-3:** The psalmist rebukes those who

⁴ The LORD is in his holy temple,
the LORD's throne is in heaven;
his eyes behold, his eyelids test,
the children of men.

⁵ The LORD tests the righteous and
the wicked,
and his soul hates him that loves
violence.

⁶ On the wicked he will rain coals of
fire and brimstone;
a scorching wind shall be the
portion of their cup.

⁷ For the LORD is righteous, he loves
righteous deeds;
the upright shall behold his
face.

To the choirmaster: according to The
Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

12 Help, LORD; for there is no
longer any that is godly;
for the faithful have vanished
from among the sons of men.

² Every one utters lies to his
neighbor;
with flattering lips and a double
heart they speak.

³ May the LORD cut off all flattering
lips,

the tongue that makes great boasts,
⁴ those who say, "With our tongue we
will prevail,
our lips are with us; who is our
master?"

⁵ "Because the poor are despoiled,
because the needy groan,
I will now arise," says the LORD;
"I will place him in the safety for
which he longs."

⁶ The promises of the LORD are
promises that are pure,
silver refined in a furnace on the
ground,
purified seven times.

⁷ Do thou, O LORD, protect us,
guard us ever from this
generation.

⁸ On every side the wicked prowl,
as vileness is exalted among the
sons of men.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

13 How long, O LORD? Wilt thou
forget me for ever?
How long wilt thou hide thy
face from me?

² How long must I bear pain^f in my
soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all
the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted
over me?

³ Consider and answer me, O LORD
my God;
lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the
sleep of death;

⁴ lest my enemy say, "I have
prevailed over him";
lest my foes rejoice because I am
shaken.

⁵ But I have trusted in thy steadfast
love;
my heart shall rejoice in thy
salvation.

⁶ I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully
with me.

f Syr: Heb hold counsels

tell him that his only safety lies in flight from his enemies. 4-7: He will stand his ground and depend on God for his vindication. 6: *Brimstone*, sulphur (Gen.19.24). *Cup*, Is.51.17; see Lk. 22.42 n.

Ps. 12: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1-4: Cry for help. The psalmist's trials are characteristic of the faithlessness of the times. 5: Perhaps spoken by a priest or temple prophet as a formal act of assurance to the suppliant. 6-8: The choir (which is perhaps implied in the use of *us*) commends reliance on the promise just made and prays that it may soon be carried out.

Ps. 13: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1-2: The psalmist's complaint is given special emotional force by the four-fold "How long?" 3-4: Prayer for help (see 4.2-4 n.). *Lighten my eyes*, compare 38.10. 5: Expression of trust (compare 3.3-4). 6: The vow (see 7.17 n.).

To the choirmaster. Of David.

A Psalm of David.

14 The fool says in his heart,
 "There is no God."
 They are corrupt, they do
 abominable deeds,
 there is none that does good.

² The LORD looks down from heaven
 upon the children of men,
 to see if there are any that act
 wisely,
 that seek after God.

³ They have all gone astray, they are
 all alike corrupt;
 there is none that does good,
 no, not one.

⁴ Have they no knowledge, all the
 evildoers
 who eat up my people as they eat
 bread,
 and do not call upon the LORD?

⁵ There they shall be in great terror,
 for God is with the generation of
 the righteous.

⁶ You would confound the plans of
 the poor,
 but the LORD is his refuge.

⁷ O that deliverance for Israel would
 come out of Zion!
 When the LORD restores the
 fortunes of his people,
 Jacob shall rejoice, Israel shall be
 glad.

15 O LORD, who shall sojourn in
 thy tent?
 Who shall dwell on thy holy hill?

² He who walks blamelessly, and does
 what is right,
 and speaks truth from his heart;

³ who does not slander with his
 tongue,
 and does no evil to his friend,
 nor takes up a reproach against
 his neighbor;

⁴ in whose eyes a reprobate is
 despised,
 but who honors those who fear
 the LORD;
 who swears to his own hurt and does
 not change;

⁵ who does not put out his money at
 interest,
 and does not take a bribe against
 the innocent.

He who does these things shall never
 be moved.

A Miktam of David.

16 Preserve me, O God, for in thee
 I take refuge.

² I say to the LORD, "Thou art my
 Lord;
 I have no good apart from thee."^g

³ As for the saints in the land, they are
 the noble,
 in whom is all my delight.

^g Jerome Tg: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

Ps. 14: Condemnation of a cynical and unrighteous age. This psalm (which is almost identical with Ps. 53) seems to be a variation on the typical lament, the psalmist generalizing his personal troubles as characteristic of an evil generation (compare 12.1-4). **1-3:** The corruption of the age. **1:** *The fool*, not a silly man, but one who is utterly corrupt in his moral character (compare 2 Sam.13.13; Pr.10.23). *There is no God*, see 10.4 n. **4-6:** A threat to the evil-doers, having the force of a curse. *Eat up my people*, compare Mic.3.2-3. **7:** A yearning for better times.

Ps. 15: A liturgy for admission to the temple. **1:** The question: Who shall be admitted to the worshipping congregation? **2-5:** The answer: Only those who have the requisite moral qualities. **5:** The prohibition of *interest* (Ex.22.25; Lev.25.35-37) has reference to charitable loans made for the relief of distress rather than to the purely business type of loan which became common in a later commercial age.

Ps. 16: An act of personal faith in God's power to save (a song of trust; see Ps. 11 n.). **1:** Prayer for deliverance from trouble. **2-8:** The psalmist bases his appeal upon his own past

- ⁴ Those who choose another god
multiply their sorrows;"
their libations of blood I will not
pour out
or take their names upon my lips.
- ⁵ The LORD is my chosen portion and
my cup;
thou holdest my lot.
- ⁶ The lines have fallen for me in
pleasant places;
yea, I have a goodly heritage.
- ⁷ I bless the LORD who gives me
counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs
me.
- ⁸ I keep the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I
shall not be moved.
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my
soul rejoices;
my body also dwells secure.
- ¹⁰ For thou dost not give me up to
Sheol,
or let thy godly one see the Pit.
- ¹¹ Thou dost show me the path of life;
in thy presence there is fulness of
joy,
in thy right hand are pleasures for
evermore.
- ³ If thou triest my heart, if thou visitest
me by night,
if thou testest me, thou wilt find no
wickedness in me;
my mouth does not transgress.
- ⁴ With regard to the works of men, by
the word of thy lips
I have avoided the ways of the
violent.
- ⁵ My steps have held fast to thy paths,
my feet have not slipped.
- ⁶ I call upon thee, for thou wilt answer
me, O God;
incline thy ear to me, hear my
words.
- ⁷ Wondrously show thy steadfast love,
O savior of those who seek
refuge
from their adversaries at thy right
hand.
- ⁸ Keep me as the apple of the eye;
hide me in the shadow of thy
wings,
- ⁹ from the wicked who despoil me,
my deadly enemies who surround
me.
- ¹⁰ They close their hearts to pity;
with their mouths they speak
arrogantly.
- ¹¹ They track me down; now they
surround me;
they set their eyes to cast me to
the ground.
- ¹² They are like a lion eager to tear,
as a young lion lurking in
ambush.

A Prayer of David.

- || ⁷ Hear a just cause, O LORD;
attend to my cry!
Give ear to my prayer from lips
free of deceit!
- ² From thee let my vindication come!
Let thy eyes see the right!

- ¹³ Arise, O LORD! confront them,
overthrow them!
Deliver my life from the wicked
by thy sword,

h Cn: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

devotion to God and to the community of the faithful. **3:** *Saints*, literally, "holy ones." **9-11:** He has complete confidence that God will not permit him to perish. **10:** *Sheol*, see 6.5 n.; *the Pit* is a synonym. *Godly one* means "devout adherent." **11:** He will survive his ordeal and through God's help enjoy life's pleasures again.

Ps. 17: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1:** Cry for vindication against false accusers (compare vv. 9-12). **3-5:** Protestation of innocence (see 4.2-4 n.). **3:** *By night*, see 3.5-6 n. **6-14:** The psalmist's prayer renewed. **8:** *Apple of the eye*, the pupil, the most precious part (Zech.2.8). **10-12:** Description of the accusers. **15:** Expression of confidence (see 3.3-4 n.). *When I awake*, compare v. 3.

¹⁴ from men by thy hand, O LORD,
 from men whose portion in life is
 of the world.
 May their belly be filled with what
 thou hast stored up for them;
 may their children have more than
 enough;
 may they leave something over to
 their babes.

¹⁵ As for me, I shall behold thy face in
 righteousness;
 when I awake, I shall be satisfied
 with beholding thy form.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David
 the servant of the LORD, who addressed
 the words of this song to the LORD on
 the day when the LORD delivered him
 from the hand of all his enemies, and
 from the hand of Saul. He said:

18 I love thee, O LORD, my strength.

² The LORD is my rock, and my
 fortress, and my deliverer,
 my God, my rock, in whom I take
 refuge,
 my shield, and the horn of my
 salvation, my stronghold.

³ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy
 to be praised,
 and I am saved from my enemies.

⁴ The cords of death encompassed me,
 the torrents of perdition assailed
 me;

⁵ the cords of Sheol entangled me,
 the snares of death confronted me.

⁶ In my distress I called upon the
 LORD;
 to my God I cried for help.
 From his temple he heard my voice,
 and my cry to him reached his ears.

⁷ Then the earth reeled and rocked;
 the foundations also of the
 mountains trembled
 and quaked, because he was
 angry.

⁸ Smoke went up from his nostrils,
 and devouring fire from his
 mouth;
 glowing coals flamed forth from
 him.

⁹ He bowed the heavens, and came
 down;
 thick darkness was under his feet.

¹⁰ He rode on a cherub, and flew;
 he came swiftly upon the wings of
 the wind.

¹¹ He made darkness his covering
 around him,
 his canopy thick clouds dark with
 water.

¹² Out of the brightness before him
 there broke through his clouds
 hailstones and coals of fire.

¹³ The LORD also thundered in the
 heavens,
 and the Most High uttered his
 voice,
 hailstones and coals of fire.

¹⁴ And he sent out his arrows, and
 scattered them;
 he flashed forth lightnings, and
 routed them.

¹⁵ Then the channels of the sea were
 seen,
 and the foundations of the world
 were laid bare,
 at thy rebuke, O LORD,
 at the blast of the breath of thy
 nostrils.

¹⁶ He reached from on high, he took
 me,
 he drew me out of many waters.

¹⁷ He delivered me from my strong
 enemy,

Ps. 18: A king gives thanks for a victory in battle (a royal thanksgiving). This psalm is also found in 2 Sam. ch. 22. **1-3:** Confession of faith in God's readiness to help. **4-6:** Metaphorical description of the psalmist's difficulties; for the actual situation see vv. 37-45. Narration of the troubles from which the worshiper has been saved is a regular feature of the thanksgiving psalms. **7-19:** God's intervention in the battle. The imagery associates the LORD's appearance with the phenomena of a thunderstorm (compare Jg.5.4-5; Ps.29.3-9). **8:** *Glowing coals*, the lightning. **10:** *Cherub*, probably a personification of the storm cloud (see Ezek.1.5 n.; Pss.68.33; 104.3). **13:** *His voice*, the thunder, as in Ps. 29. **15:** *The breath of thy nostrils*, the storm wind.

and from those who hated me;
for they were too mighty for me.
18 They came upon me in the day of
my calamity;
but the LORD was my stay.
19 He brought me forth into a broad
place;
he delivered me, because he
delighted in me.
20 The LORD rewarded me according
to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my
hands he recompensed me.
21 For I have kept the ways of the
LORD,
and have not wickedly departed
from my God.
22 For all his ordinances were before
me,
and his statutes I did not put
away from me.
23 I was blameless before him,
and I kept myself from guilt.
24 Therefore the LORD has
recompensed me according to
my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my
hands in his sight.
25 With the loyal thou dost show
thyself loyal;
with the blameless man thou dost
show thyself blameless;
26 with the pure thou dost show
thyself pure;
and with the crooked thou dost
show thyself perverse.
27 For thou dost deliver a humble
people;
but the haughty eyes thou dost
bring down.
28 Yea, thou dost light my lamp;
the LORD my God lightens my
darkness.
29 Yea, by thee I can crush a troop;
and by my God I can leap over a
wall.
30 This God—his way is perfect;

the promise of the LORD proves
true;
he is a shield for all those who take
refuge in him.
31 For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our
God?—
32 the God who girded me with
strength,
and made my way safe.
33 He made my feet like hinds' feet,
and set me secure on the heights.
34 He trains my hands for war,
so that my arms can bend a bow
of bronze.
35 Thou hast given me the shield of thy
salvation,
and thy right hand supported me,
and thy helpⁱ made me great.
36 Thou didst give a wide place for my
steps under me,
and my feet did not slip.
37 I pursued my enemies and overtook
them;
and did not turn back till they
were consumed.
38 I thrust them through, so that they
were not able to rise;
they fell under my feet.
39 For thou didst gird me with strength
for the battle;
thou didst make my assailants
sink under me.
40 Thou didst make my enemies turn
their backs to me,
and those who hated me I
destroyed.
41 They cried for help, but there was
none to save,
they cried to the LORD, but he did
not answer them.
42 I beat them fine as dust before the
wind;
I cast them out like the mire of the
streets.
43 Thou didst deliver me from strife
with the peoples;^j

i Or gentleness j Gk Tg: Heb people

20-27: The king attributes the LORD's favor toward him to his own previous loyalty to God and his keeping the commandments. **28-30:** An exuberant outburst of confidence in what he can accomplish with God's help. **31-42:** A more prosaic account of the battle and the subse-

thou didst make me the head of
the nations;
people whom I had not known
served me.
44 As soon as they heard of me they
obeyed me;
foreigners came cringing to me.
45 Foreigners lost heart,
and came trembling out of their
fastnesses.
46 The LORD lives; and blessed be my
rock,
and exalted be the God of my
salvation,
47 the God who gave me vengeance
and subdued peoples under me;
48 who delivered me from my enemies;
yea, thou didst exalt me above my
adversaries;
thou didst deliver me from men of
violence.
49 For this I will extol thee, O LORD,
among the nations,
and sing praises to thy name.
50 Great triumphs he gives to his king,
and shows steadfast love to his
anointed,
to David and his descendants for
ever.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

19 The heavens are telling the glory
of God;
and the firmament proclaims his
handiwork.

2 Day to day pours forth speech,

and night to night declares
knowledge.

3 There is no speech, nor are there
words;

their voice is not heard;

4 yet their voice^k goes out through all
the earth,
and their words to the end of the
world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun,
5 which comes forth like a bridegroom
leaving his chamber,
and like a strong man runs its
course with joy.

6 Its rising is from the end of the
heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and there is nothing hid from its
heat.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;

8 the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is
pure,

enlightening the eyes;

9 the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring for ever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than
gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.

^k Gk Jerome Compare Syr: Heb line

quent victory (compare vv. 17–19). 43–45: The king became ruler of an empire at peace. 46–50: Concluding hymn of praise and thanksgiving. 50: This verse establishes the identity of the psalmist as a king of the Davidic dynasty. *His anointed*, see Ps.2.2 n. At least the nucleus of this psalm may go back to David.

Ps. 19: Hymn to God as creator of nature and giver of the law. 1–6: The glory of God is manifested in the phenomena of the heavens and particularly in the might of the sun. 1–4a: The sky and the successive days and nights are personified as members of a choir ceaselessly singing God's praises. 3: *There is no speech* . . . i.e. they cannot be heard by human ears. 4b–6: The skies provide a track along which the sun, like an athlete, runs his daily course. 7–14: Probably a later writer added these verses praising the revelation of God's will in the Mosaic law in order to counterbalance what seemed to him the almost pagan emphasis upon the revelation of God in nature (vv. 1–6). 7–9: Six synonyms are used to describe the law (compare Ps. 119). 9: *Fear*, many scholars emend to "word" (see 119.11). 10: Observance of the law is a joy, not a burden.

- ¹¹ Moreover by them is thy servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹² But who can discern his errors?
Clear thou me from hidden faults.
- ¹³ Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.
- ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 20** The LORD answer you in the day of trouble!
The name of the God of Jacob protect you!
- ² May he send you help from the sanctuary,
and give you support from Zion!
- ³ May he remember all your offerings,
and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices! *Selah*
- ⁴ May he grant you your heart's desire,
and fulfil all your plans!
- ⁵ May we shout for joy over your victory,
and in the name of our God set up our banners!

- May the LORD fulfil all your petitions!
- ⁶ Now I know that the LORD will help his anointed;
he will answer him from his holy heaven
with mighty victories by his right hand.
- ⁷ Some boast of chariots, and some of horses;
but we boast of the name of the LORD our God.
- ⁸ They will collapse and fall;
but we shall rise and stand upright.
- ⁹ Give victory to the king, O LORD;
answer us when we call.¹

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 21** In thy strength the king rejoices,
O LORD;
and in thy help how greatly he exults!
- ² Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
and hast not withheld the request of his lips. *Selah*
- ³ For thou dost meet him with goodly blessings;
thou dost set a crown of fine gold upon his head.
- ⁴ He asked life of thee; thou gavest it to him,
length of days for ever and ever.
- ⁵ His glory is great through thy help;
splendor and majesty thou dost bestow upon him.

¹ Gk: Heb give victory, O LORD, let the King answer us when we call

12-13: The poet asks to be delivered from either accidental or deliberate violations of the commandments. **14:** He prays that his hymn may be pleasing to God.

Ps. 20: Prayer for the king's victory in battle. This psalm was probably composed to accompany a sacrifice offered before the battle was begun (v. 3; compare 1 Sam.13.8-15a). **1-5:** The prayer sung at the altar, or while approaching it. **3:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **5:** Between v. 5 and v. 6 some liturgical action evidently occurred, probably the proclamation of an oracle of victory by a priest or temple prophet (see 12.5 n.; compare also 21.8-12), which then inspired the expression of confidence in vv. 6-8. **6:** *Anointed*, see 2.2 n. **9:** Concluding exclamatory prayer.

Ps. 21: Thanksgiving after the king's victory in battle. This psalm is intentionally paired with Ps. 20. **1-7:** God is praised for having answered the king's prayer. **2:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n.

- ⁶ Yea, thou dost make him most
blessed for ever;
thou dost make him glad with the
joy of thy presence.
- ⁷ For the king trusts in the LORD;
and through the steadfast love of
the Most High he shall not be
moved.
- ⁸ Your hand will find out all your
enemies;
your right hand will find out those
who hate you.
- ⁹ You will make them as a blazing
oven
when you appear.
The LORD will swallow them up in
his wrath;
and fire will consume them.
- ¹⁰ You will destroy their offspring
from the earth,
and their children from among the
sons of men.
- ¹¹ If they plan evil against you,
if they devise mischief, they will
not succeed.
- ¹² For you will put them to flight;
you will aim at their faces with
your bows.
- ¹³ Be exalted, O LORD, in thy strength!
We will sing and praise thy power.
- and by night, but find no rest.
- ³ Yet thou art holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
- ⁴ In thee our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and thou didst
deliver them.
- ⁵ To thee they cried, and were saved;
in thee they trusted, and were not
disappointed.
- ⁶ But I am a worm, and no man;
scorned by men, and despised
by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me mock at me,
they make mouths at me, they wag
their heads;
- ⁸ "He committed his cause to the
LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, for he delights
in him!"
- ⁹ Yet thou art he who took me from
the womb;
thou didst keep me safe upon my
mother's breasts.
- ¹⁰ Upon thee was I cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me thou
hast been my God.
- ¹¹ Be not far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is none to help.

To the choirmaster: according to The
Hind of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

22 My God, my God, why hast
thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping
me, from the words of my
groaning?
² O my God, I cry by day, but thou
dost not answer;

- ¹² Many bulls encompass me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround
me;
- ¹³ they open wide their mouths at
me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.
- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax,
it is melted within my breast;

8-12: An oracle promising a succession of victories, addressed to the king by a priest or temple prophet (compare 20.5 n.). **13:** Concluding exclamation of praise.

Ps. 22: Prayer for deliverance from mortal illness (a lament). **1-2:** Cry for help. **1:** Quoted by Jesus on the cross (Mk.15.34). **3:** God has helped his people in time past. **6-8:** The psalmist's misery is aggravated by the mockery of those who regard his illness as proof that God has forsaken him. **9-11:** God's help in former times inspires him to pray that it may continue in the present. **12-18:** Description of his condition. **12-13:** His detractors behave like savage animals (see also v. 16, although the meaning of the third line is obscure; and vv. 20-21). *Bulls of Bashan*, Am.4.1. **14-15, 17-18:** A vivid account of the poet's fever and resulting weakness.

- ¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a
potsherd,
and my tongue cleaves to my
jaws;
thou dost lay me in the dust of
death.
- ¹⁶ Yea, dogs are round about me;
a company of evildoers encircle
me;
they have pierced^m my hands
and feet—
- ¹⁷ I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;
- ¹⁸ they divide my garments among
them,
and for my raiment they cast lots.
- ¹⁹ But thou, O LORD, be not far off!
O thou my help, hasten to my
aid!
- ²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my lifeⁿ from the power of the
dog!
- ²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion,
my afflicted soul^o from the horns
of the wild oxen!
- ²² I will tell of thy name to my
brethren;
in the midst of the congregation
I will praise thee:
- ²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him!
all you sons of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you
sons of Israel!
- ²⁴ For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted;
and he has not hid his face from
him,
but has heard, when he cried to
him.
- ²⁵ From thee comes my praise in the
great congregation;

- my vows I will pay before those
who fear him.
- ²⁶ The afflicted^p shall eat and be
satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise
the LORD!
May your hearts live for ever!
- ²⁷ All the ends of the earth shall
remember
and turn to the LORD;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.^q
- ²⁸ For dominion belongs to the
LORD,
and he rules over the nations.
- ²⁹ Yea, to him^r shall all the proud of
the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go
down to the dust,
and he who cannot keep himself
alive.
- ³⁰ Posterity shall serve him;
men shall tell of the Lord to the
coming generation,
- ³¹ and proclaim his deliverance to a
people yet unborn,
that he has wrought it.

A Psalm of David.

- 23** The LORD is my shepherd, I
shall not want;
² he makes me lie down in green
pastures.
He leads me beside still waters;^s
³ he restores my soul.^t

m Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *like a lion*
n Heb *my only one*
o Gk Syr: Heb *thou hast answered me*
p Or *poor*
q Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *thee*
r Cn: Heb *they have eaten and*
s Heb *the waters of rest*
t Or *life*

16: Dogs, enemies (compare *lion, wild oxen*, v. 21). **18:** He is so nearly dead that his neighbors and relatives have already begun to divide his property. **19–21:** Prayer for healing and for deliverance from slanderers. **22–31:** If he recovers, he vows to offer a formal thanksgiving *in the midst of the congregation, the temple* (see 7.17 n.). **22:** The vow (compare v. 25). **23–31:** The hymn which will then be sung.

Ps. 23: An expression of confidence in God's protection (a song of trust; see Ps. 11 n.). **1–4:** The LORD is compared to a shepherd. **3:** *Soul* means vitality, life. *Paths of righteousness*, or

He leads me in paths of
righteousness^u
for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death,^v
I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil,
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely^w goodness and mercy^x shall
follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the
LORD
for ever.^y

A Psalm of David.

24 The earth is the LORD's and the
fulness thereof,
the world and those who dwell
therein;

² for he has founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the rivers.

³ Who shall ascend the hill of the
LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy
place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure
heart,

who does not lift up his soul to
what is false,
and does not swear deceitfully.

⁵ He will receive blessing from the
LORD,
and vindication from the God of
his salvation.

⁶ Such is the generation of those who
seek him,
who seek the face of the God of
Jacob.^z *Selah*

⁷ Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come
in.

⁸ Who is the King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!

⁹ Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up,^a O ancient
doors!
that the King of glory may come
in.

¹⁰ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory! *Selah*

A Psalm of David.

25 To thee, O LORD, I lift up my
soul.

² O my God, in thee I trust,
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.

^u Or right paths ^v Or the valley of deep darkness

^w Or Only ^x Or kindness

^y Or as long as I live

^z Gk Syr: Heb thy face, O Jacob

^a Gk Syr Jerome Tg Compare verse 7: Heb lift up

"of rightness," that is, right paths (see note *u*), which suits the context better. **4:** *Shadow of death* is the reading of the scribes, but "deep darkness" (see note *v*) is the better rendering; compare 44.19; 107.10; Job 3.5; Is.9.2; etc., where the same Hebrew expression occurs. **5-6:** The LORD is compared to a gracious host. **6:** *Dwell in the house of the LORD* means to worship in the temple (compare 27.4). *For ever*, Hebrew "for length of days," meaning "as long as I live" (see note *y* and 27.4).

Ps. 24: A liturgy on entering the sanctuary, probably used in connection with a procession of the ark. **1-6:** Perhaps sung by a choir within the temple gates. **1-2:** Acknowledgment of the LORD as the creator. **3:** The question: Who shall be admitted to the temple? (compare Ps. 15). **4-6:** The answer: Only those who have the requisite moral qualities. **6:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **7-10:** The choir outside the gates, presumably accompanied by the ark, now requests to be admitted. **7:** *Heads*, lintels. **8-10:** *The King of glory* . . . , means the God of Israel, whose presence was associated with the ark (Num.10.35-36).

Ps. 25: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). In acrostic form (compare Pss. 9-10 n.), every successive verse beginning with another letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This

- ³ Yea, let none that wait for thee be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
- ⁴ Make me to know thy ways, O LORD;
teach me thy paths.
- ⁵ Lead me in thy truth, and teach me,
for thou art the God of my salvation;
for thee I wait all the day long.
- ⁶ Be mindful of thy mercy, O LORD,
and of thy steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
- ⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth,
or my transgressions;
according to thy steadfast love remember me,
for thy goodness' sake, O LORD!
- ⁸ Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- ⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
- ¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.
- ¹¹ For thy name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
- ¹² Who is the man that fears the LORD?
Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.
- ¹³ He himself shall abide in prosperity,
and his children shall possess the land.
- ¹⁴ The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes known to them his covenant.
- ¹⁵ My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.
- ¹⁶ Turn thou to me, and be gracious to me;
for I am lonely and afflicted.
- ¹⁷ Relieve the troubles of my heart,
and bring me^b out of my distresses.
- ¹⁸ Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
- ¹⁹ Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
- ²⁰ Oh guard my life, and deliver me;
let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in thee.
- ²¹ May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for thee.
- ²² Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all his troubles.

A Psalm of David.

- 26** Vindicate me, O LORD,
for I have walked in my integrity,
and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.
- ² Prove me, O LORD, and try me;
test my heart and my mind.
- ³ For thy steadfast love is before my eyes,
and I walk in faithfulness to thee.^c
- ⁴ I do not sit with false men,
nor do I consort with dissemblers;

^b Or *The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me*
^c Or *in thy faithfulness*

artificial pattern accounts for the absence of any clear, logical structure, although the psalm has most of the elements of the typical lament: cry for help (vv. 1-3), the psalmist's situation (vv. 18-19), protestation of innocence (v. 21), expression of trust (vv. 8-15), prayer for vindication (vv. 16-20). **13:** *Possess the land*, see 37.9,11,29; compare Dt.11.8-9. **22:** Probably a liturgical addition adapting an individual prayer to congregational use.

Ps. 26: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-3:** Cry for vindication against an unjust charge (compare 1 Kg.8.31-32). **4-7:** Protestation of innocence (compare

PSALM 27

- ⁵ I hate the company of evildoers,
and I will not sit with the wicked.
- ⁶ I wash my hands in innocence,
and go about thy altar, O LORD,
⁷ singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all thy wondrous
deeds.
- ⁸ O LORD, I love the habitation of thy
house,
and the place where thy glory
dwells.
- ⁹ Sweep me not away with sinners,
nor my life with bloodthirsty men,
¹⁰ men in whose hands are evil devices,
and whose right hands are full of
bribes.
- ¹¹ But as for me, I walk in my integrity;
redeem me, and be gracious to me.
- ¹² My foot stands on level ground;
in the great congregation I will
bless the LORD.

A Psalm of David.

27 The LORD is my light and my
salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold^d of my
life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

- ² When evildoers assail me,
uttering slanders against me,^e
my adversaries and foes,
they shall stumble and fall.
- ³ Though a host encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation"

- ⁴ One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after;
that I may dwell in the house of the
LORD
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
and to inquire in his temple.
- ⁵ For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover
of his tent,
he will set me high upon a rock.
- ⁶ And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies round about
me;
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the
LORD.
- ⁷ Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!
⁸ Thou hast said, "Seek ye my face."
My heart says to thee,
"Thy face, LORD, do I seek."
⁹ Hide not thy face from me.

Turn not thy servant away in anger,
thou who hast been my help.
Cast me not off, forsake me not,
O God of my salvation!
¹⁰ For my father and my mother have
forsaken me,
but the LORD will take me up.

- ¹¹ Teach me thy way, O LORD;
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.
- ¹² Give me not up to the will of my
adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen
against me,
and they breathe out violence.

^d Or refuge ^e Heb to eat up my flesh

4.2-4). 6-7: The protest is dramatized in a liturgical ceremony. *Wash my hands in innocence*, compare Dt.21.6-8; Ps.51.7. 8-11: Prayer for help. *Thy glory dwells*, Is.4.5; Ezek.43.4-5. 12: The vow (see 7.17 n.).

Ps. 27: An act of devotion and a prayer for deliverance. 1-6: Song of trust (see Ps. 11 n.). 4: *Dwell in the house of the LORD*, see 23.6 n. As with most of the psalms, the author is probably a temple functionary, a Levite. 6: *Tent*, poetic name for the temple. 7-14: A lament. 7-9: Cry for help. 10-12: The psalmist's situation. 13-14: Expression of confidence. *In the land of the living*, i.e. "during my life."

- ¹³ I believe that I shall see the
goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living!
¹⁴ Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take
courage;
yea, wait for the LORD!

A Psalm of David.

28 To thee, O LORD, I call;
my rock, be not deaf to me,
lest, if thou be silent to me,
I become like those who go down
to the Pit.

² Hear the voice of my supplication,
as I cry to thee for help,
as I lift up my hands
toward thy most holy sanctuary.^f

³ Take me not off with the wicked,
with those who are workers of
evil,
who speak peace with their
neighbors,
while mischief is in their hearts.

⁴ Requite them according to their
work,
and according to the evil of their
deeds;
requite them according to the work
of their hands;

render them their due reward.
⁵ Because they do not regard the works
of the LORD,
or the work of his hands,
he will break them down and build
them up no more.

⁶ Blessed be the LORD!
for he has heard the voice of my
supplications.

⁷ The LORD is my strength and my
shield;

in him my heart trusts;
so I am helped, and my heart exults,
and with my song I give thanks to
him.

⁸ The LORD is the strength of his
people,
he is the saving refuge of his
anointed.

⁹ O save thy people, and bless thy
heritage;
be thou their shepherd, and carry
them for ever.

A Psalm of David.

29 Ascribe to the LORD, O
heavenly beings,^g
ascribe to the LORD glory and
strength.

² Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his
name;
worship the LORD in holy array.

³ The voice of the LORD is upon the
waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, upon many waters.

⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful,
the voice of the LORD is full of
majesty.

⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the
cedars,
the LORD breaks the cedars of
Lebanon.

⁶ He makes Lebanon to skip like a
calf,
and Si'ron like a young wild ox.

⁷ The voice of the LORD flashes forth
flames of fire.

^f Heb thy innermost sanctuary
^g Heb sons of gods

Ps. 28: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-5:** Cry for vindication (compare 26.1-3). **1:** *The Pit*, i.e. Sheol (see 6.5 n.). **6-7:** After v. 5, a priest or temple prophet probably delivered an oracle of assurance (compare 12.5 n.), to which these verses are the psalmist's grateful response. **8-9:** See 25.22 n. **8:** *Anointed*, see 2.2 n. **9:** *Shepherd*, Is.40.11.

Ps. 29: Hymn to the God of the storm. **1-2:** Call to worship. **3-9:** The LORD's manifestation in the thunderstorm. **3:** *The voice of the LORD*, the thunder. *The waters*, the Mediterranean, but with mythological overtones. **5:** *Lebanon*, the principal mountains of Syria. **6:** *Sirion*, Mount Hermon. **7:** *Flames of fire*, the lightning. **8:** *Kadesh*, probably the Kadesh of the wilderness

- ⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness,
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
- ⁹ The voice of the LORD makes the oaks to whirl,^h
and strips the forests bare;
and in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
- ¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king for ever.
- ¹¹ May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless his people with peace!
- ⁶ As for me, I said in my prosperity,
"I shall never be moved."
⁷ By thy favor, O LORD,
thou hadst established me as a strong mountain;
thou didst hide thy face,
I was dismayed.
- ⁸ To thee, O LORD, I cried;
and to the LORD I made supplication:
⁹ "What profit is there in my death,
if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise thee?
Will it tell of thy faithfulness?"
¹⁰ Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me!
O LORD, be thou my helper!"
- ¹¹ Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
thou hast loosed my sackcloth
and girded me with gladness,
¹² that my soulⁱ may praise thee and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever.

A Psalm of David. A Song at the dedication of the Temple.

30 I will extol thee, O LORD, for
thou hast drawn me up,
and hast not let my foes rejoice
over me.

² O LORD my God, I cried to thee for help,
and thou hast healed me.

³ O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.^j

⁴ Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints,
and give thanks to his holy name.

⁵ For his anger is but for a moment,
and his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

31 In thee, O LORD, do I seek refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
in thy righteousness deliver me!

² Incline thy ear to me,
rescue me speedily!
Be thou a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me!

³ Yea, thou art my rock and my fortress;

^h Or makes the hinds to calve
ⁱ Or that I should not go down to the Pit
^j Heb that glory

wanderings (Num.20.1). 10-11: Above the tumult of the storm, the LORD reigns in majestic peace.

Ps. 30: Thanksgiving for healing. 1-3: God is praised for the psalmist's recovery. The psalm was probably sung in fulfilment of a vow (see 7.17 n.). 3: *Sheol . . . the Pit*, see 28.1 n. 4-5: The congregation is invited to join in his thanksgiving. 4: *Saints*, devout adherents (see 16.10 n., same Hebrew word). 6-12: The narrative of his experience (see 18.4-6 n.): Before his illness he had felt perfectly secure (vv. 6-7); when illness came, he turned to God in prayer (vv. 8-10), and God answered him (vv. 11-12).

Ps. 31: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). Verses 1-8 and 9-24 are parallel in form, both containing the principal elements of a lament. 1-8: Cry for help (vv. 1-5),

- for thy name's sake lead me and
guide me,
4 take me out of the net which is hidden
for me,
for thou art my refuge.
5 Into thy hand I commit my spirit;
thou hast redeemed me, O LORD,
faithful God.
- 6 Thou hatest^k those who pay regard
to vain idols;
but I trust in the LORD.
7 I will rejoice and be glad for thy
steadfast love,
because thou hast seen my
affliction,
thou hast taken heed of my
adversities,
8 and hast not delivered me into the
hand of the enemy;
thou hast set my feet in a broad
place.
- 9 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am
in distress;
my eye is wasted from grief,
my soul and my body also.
10 For my life is spent with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my
misery,^l
and my bones waste away.
- 11 I am the scorn of all my adversaries,
a horror^m to my neighbors,
an object of dread to my
acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee
from me.
12 I have passed out of mind like one
who is dead;
I have become like a broken
vessel.
13 Yea, I hear the whispering of many-
terror on every side!-
as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my life.
- 14 But I trust in thee, O LORD,
I say, "Thou art my God."
15 My times are in thy hand;
deliver me from the hand of my
enemies and persecutors!
16 Let thy face shine on thy servant;
save me in thy steadfast love!
17 Let me not be put to shame, O
LORD,
for I call on thee;
let the wicked be put to shame,
let them go dumbfounded to Sheol.
18 Let the lying lips be dumb,
which speak insolently against the
righteous
in pride and contempt.
- 19 O how abundant is thy goodness,
which thou hast laid up for those
who fear thee,
and wrought for those who take
refuge in thee,
in the sight of the sons of men!
20 In the covert of thy presence thou
hidest them
from the plots of men;
thou holdest them safe under thy
shelter
from the strife of tongues.
- 21 Blessed be the LORD,
for he has wondrously shown his
steadfast love to me
when I was beset as in a besieged
city.
22 I had said in my alarm,
"I am driven far" from thy sight."
But thou didst hear my
supplications,
when I cried to thee for help.
- 23 Love the LORD, all you his saints!
The LORD preserves the faithful,
but abundantly requites him who
acts haughtily.

^k With one Heb Ms Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *I hate*
^l Gk Syr: Heb *iniquity*
^m Cn: Heb *exceedingly*
ⁿ Another reading is *cut off*

the psalmist's situation (v. 4), expression of confidence (v. 5), protestation of innocence (v. 6), grateful recognition of God's help (vv. 7-8; perhaps this followed an oracle of assurance; see 12.5 n.). 9-24: Cry for help (v. 9), the psalmist's situation (vv. 10-13), expression of confidence (vv. 14, 19-20), prayer for vindication (vv. 15-18), grateful recognition of God's help (vv. 21-24). 12: *Broken vessel*, compare Ec.12.6. 13: Jer.20.10. 23: See 30.4 n.

²⁴ Be strong, and let your heart take
courage,
all you who wait for the LORD!

A Psalm of David. A Maskil.

32 Blessed is he whose
transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

² Blessed is the man to whom the
LORD imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no
deceit.

³ When I declared not my sin, my
body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night thy hand was
heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up^o as by
the heat of summer. *Selah*

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to thee,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my
transgressions to the LORD";
then thou didst forgive the guilt
of my sin. *Selah*

⁶ Therefore let every one who is godly
offer prayer to thee;
at a time of distress,^p in the rush of
great waters,
they shall not reach him.

⁷ Thou art a hiding place for me,
thou preservest me from trouble;
thou dost encompass me with
deliverance.^q *Selah*

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you
the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye
upon you.

⁹ Be not like a horse or a mule,
without understanding,

which must be curbed with bit
and bridle,
else it will not keep with you.

¹⁰ Many are the pangs of the wicked;
but steadfast love surrounds him
who trusts in the LORD.

¹¹ Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O
righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright
in heart!

33 Rejoice in the LORD, O you
righteous!

Praise befits the upright.

² Praise the LORD with the lyre,
make melody to him with the
harp of ten strings!

³ Sing to him a new song,
play skillfully on the strings, with
loud shouts.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is upright;
and all his work is done in
faithfulness.

⁵ He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast
love of the LORD.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the
heavens were made,
and all their host by the breath of
his mouth.

⁷ He gathered the waters of the sea as
in a bottle;
he put the deeps in storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD,
let all the inhabitants of the world
stand in awe of him!

⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood
forth.

^o Heb obscure

^p Cn: Heb at a time of finding only

^q Cn: Heb shouts of deliverance

Ps. 32: Thanksgiving for healing. 1-2: God is praised for the psalmist's recovery. **1:** *Blessed*, see 1.1 n. Since disease was commonly regarded as punishment for sin, healing is evidence that the *transgression is forgiven*. **3-5:** The psalmist's experience (see 18.4-6 n.). **4:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **5:** Healing came only after he acknowledged himself to be a sinner. **6-11:** The psalmist commends to the congregation similar faith in God (vv. 6-7,10) and obedience to God's will (vv. 8-9).

Ps. 33: Hymn to God as creator and lord of history. 1-3: Call to worship. **4-5:** The character of Israel's God. **6-9:** The LORD as creator. The emphasis upon the divine word in vv. 6 and 9

- ¹⁰ The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nought;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
- ¹¹ The counsel of the LORD stands for ever,
the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- ¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!
- ¹³ The LORD looks down from heaven,
he sees all the sons of men;
¹⁴ from where he sits enthroned he looks forth
on all the inhabitants of the earth,
¹⁵ he who fashions the hearts of them all,
and observes all their deeds.
- ¹⁶ A king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.
- ¹⁷ The war horse is a vain hope for victory,
and by its great might it cannot save.
- ¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
¹⁹ that he may deliver their soul from death,
and keep them alive in famine.
- ²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and shield.
- ²¹ Yea, our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.
- ²² Let thy steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in thee.

A Psalm of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.

- 34** I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and be glad.
- ³ O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!
- ⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
- ⁶ This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him,
and saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.
- ⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good!
Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!
- ⁹ O fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no want!
- ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

- ¹¹ Come, O sons, listen to me,
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- ¹² What man is there who desires life,
and covets many days, that he may enjoy good?

r Gk Syr Jerome: Heb their

reflects Gen.1.3–31. **10–19:** The LORD rules over the destinies of nations. **20–22:** Israel puts her complete trust in him.

Ps. 34: Thanksgiving for deliverance from trouble. Like Pss. 9–10 and 25, this psalm is an alphabetical acrostic. **1–3:** A brief hymn of praise. **4–6:** The narrative of the psalmist's experience (see 18.4–6 n.; compare 30.6–12; 32.3–5). **7–22:** He commends to the congregation the same kind of faith in God, and assures them that the LORD will never be found wanting (compare 32.6–11). The style is that of the teachers of wisdom (compare Pss. 1 and 37; also v. 11 with Pr.1.8; 2.1). **9:** *Saints*, see 16.3 n. **12–14:** 1 Pet.3.10–12. **20:** Jn.19.36.

- ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking
deceit.
- ¹⁴ Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the
righteous,
and his ears toward their cry.
- ¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against
evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of
them from the earth.
- ¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the
LORD hears,
and delivers them out of all their
troubles.
- ¹⁸ The LORD is near to the
brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.
- ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the
righteous;
but the LORD delivers him out of
them all.
- ²⁰ He keeps all his bones;
not one of them is broken.
- ²¹ Evil shall slay the wicked;
and those who hate the righteous
will be condemned.
- ²² The LORD redeems the life of his
servants;
none of those who take refuge in
him will be condemned.

A Psalm of David.

- 35** Contend, O LORD, with those
who contend with me;
fight against those who fight
against me!
- ² Take hold of shield and buckler,
and rise for my help!
- ³ Draw the spear and javelin
against my pursuers!
Say to my soul,

"I am your deliverance!"

- ⁴ Let them be put to shame and
dishonor
who seek after my life!
Let them be turned back and
confounded
who devise evil against me!
- ⁵ Let them be like chaff before the
wind,
with the angel of the LORD
driving them on!
- ⁶ Let their way be dark and slippery,
with the angel of the LORD
pursuing them!
- ⁷ For without cause they hid their net
for me;
without cause they dug a pit^s for
my life.
- ⁸ Let ruin come upon them unawares!
And let the net which they hid
ensnare them;
let them fall therein to ruin!
- ⁹ Then my soul shall rejoice in the
LORD,
exulting in his deliverance.
- ¹⁰ All my bones shall say,
"O LORD, who is like thee,
thou who deliverest the weak
from him who is too strong for
him,
the weak and needy from him who
despoils him?"
- ¹¹ Malicious witnesses rise up;
they ask me of things that I know
not.
- ¹² They requite me evil for good;
my soul is forlorn.
- ¹³ But I, when they were sick—
I wore sackcloth,
I afflicted myself with fasting.
I prayed with head bowed^t on my
bosom,

^s The word *pit* is transposed from the preceding line

^t Or *My prayer turned back*

Ps. 35: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). As in Ps. 31, the elements of the lament occur more than once, so that vv. 1–10, 11–18, and 19–28 can be treated as separate units. **1–10:** The first lament. **1–6:** Cry for vindication and vengeance. **7:** The psalmist's situation. **8:** Prayer for vengeance renewed. **9–10:** The vow (see 7.17 n.). **11–18:** The second lament. **11–16:** The psalmist's situation; his innocence. As in some other laments, it is not clear whether the psalmist's principal trouble arises from his enemies or from a sickness of which they have

¹⁴ as though I grieved for my friend
or my brother;
I went about as one who laments
his mother,
bowed down and in mourning.

¹⁵ But at my stumbling they gathered
in glee,
they gathered together against me;
cripples whom I knew not
slandered me without ceasing;
¹⁶ they impiously mocked more and
more,^u
gnashing at me with their teeth.

¹⁷ How long, O LORD, wilt thou look
on?
Rescue me from their ravages,
my life from the lions!
¹⁸ Then I will thank thee in the great
congregation;
in the mighty throng I will praise
thee.

¹⁹ Let not those rejoice over me
who are wrongfully my foes,
and let not those wink the eye
who hate me without cause.
²⁰ For they do not speak peace,
but against those who are quiet in
the land
they conceive words of deceit.
²¹ They open wide their mouths
against me;
they say, "Aha, Aha!
our eyes have seen it!"

²² Thou hast seen, O LORD; be not
silent!
O Lord, be not far from me!
²³ Bestir thyself, and awake for my
right,
for my cause, my God and my
Lord!

²⁴ Vindicate me, O LORD, my God,
according to thy righteousness;

and let them not rejoice over me!
²⁵ Let them not say to themselves,
"Aha, we have our heart's desire!"
Let them not say, "We have
swallowed him up."

²⁶ Let them be put to shame and
confusion altogether
who rejoice at my calamity!
Let them be clothed with shame and
dishonor
who magnify themselves against
me!

²⁷ Let those who desire my vindication
shout for joy and be glad,
and say evermore,
"Great is the LORD,
who delights in the welfare of his
servant!"

²⁸ Then my tongue shall tell of thy
righteousness
and of thy praise all the day long.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David,
the servant of the LORD.

36 Transgression speaks to the
wicked
deep in his heart;
there is no fear of God
before his eyes.

² For he flatters himself in his own
eyes
that his iniquity cannot be found
out and hated.

³ The words of his mouth are mischief
and deceit;
he has ceased to act wisely and do
good.

⁴ He plots mischief while on his bed;
he sets himself in a way that is not
good;
he spurns not evil.

^u Cn Compare Gk: Heb *like the profanest of mockers of
a cake*

taken advantage. **17:** Cry for help. **18:** The vow (see 7.17 n.). **19-29:** The third lament. **19:** Cry for help. **20-21:** The psalmist's situation. **22-27:** Prayer for vindication. **28:** The vow (compare v. 18).

Ps. 36: A psalm of mixed type: vv. 1-4 are in the type of a wisdom psalm; vv. 5-9, a hymn; vv. 10-12, a prayer in the style of a lament. Since the last section seems to determine the character of the whole, the psalm should probably be classified as a liturgy of lament. **1-4:** The character of the wicked man. **1:** The wicked man is inspired by *transgression* just as a prophet

- ⁵ Thy steadfast love, O LORD, extends
to the heavens,
thy faithfulness to the clouds.
- ⁶ Thy righteousness is like the
mountains of God,
thy judgments are like the great
deep;
man and beast thou savest, O
LORD.
- ⁷ How precious is thy steadfast love,
O God!
The children of men take refuge
in the shadow of thy wings.
- ⁸ They feast on the abundance of thy
house,
and thou givest them drink from
the river of thy delights.
- ⁹ For with thee is the fountain of life;
in thy light do we see light.
- ¹⁰ O continue thy steadfast love to
those who know thee,
and thy salvation to the upright of
heart!
- ¹¹ Let not the foot of arrogance come
upon me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive
me away.
- ¹² There the evildoers lie prostrate,
they are thrust down, unable to
rise.

A Psalm of David.

- 37** Fret not yourself because of the
wicked,
be not envious of wrongdoers!
² For they will soon fade like the
grass,
and wither like the green herb.
- ³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;

- so you will dwell in the land, and
enjoy security.
- ⁴ Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of
your heart.
- ⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.
- ⁶ He will bring forth your vindication
as the light,
and your right as the noonday.
- ⁷ Be still before the LORD, and wait
patiently for him;
fret not yourself over him who
prosperes in his way,
over the man who carries out evil
devices!
- ⁸ Refrain from anger, and forsake
wrath!
Fret not yourself; it tends only to
evil.
- ⁹ For the wicked shall be cut off;
but those who wait for the LORD
shall possess the land.
- ¹⁰ Yet a little while, and the wicked will
be no more;
though you look well at his place,
he will not be there.
- ¹¹ But the meek shall possess the land,
and delight themselves in
abundant prosperity.
- ¹² The wicked plots against the
righteous,
and gnashes his teeth at him;
- ¹³ but the LORD laughs at the wicked,
for he sees that his day is coming.
- ¹⁴ The wicked draw the sword and
bend their bows,
to bring down the poor and needy,

is inspired by the Spirit of God. **5-9:** The character of God, who is a source of blessing to the righteous and provides them with a refuge. *Fountain of life*, compare Jer.2.13. **10-11:** Prayer for deliverance. **12:** Assurance of having been heard.

Ps. 37. The certainty of retribution for the wicked (a wisdom psalm). The argument is directed to those discouraged by the injustices which apparently dominate the world. The acrostic form of the psalm (see Pss. 9-10 n.) explains the lack of a clear outline or logical progression of thought. **3:** *The land*, Palestine (vv. 9,11,22,29; compare Dt.11.8-32). **10:** The heart of the argument: Do not be impatient! Retribution will come soon, even though it is not evident now (compare vv. 35-36). **11:** Compare Mt.5.5.

to slay those who walk uprightly;
 15 their sword shall enter their own
 heart,
 and their bows shall be broken.

16 Better is a little that the righteous
 has
 than the abundance of many
 wicked.
 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be
 broken;
 but the LORD upholds the
 righteous.

18 The LORD knows the days of the
 blameless,
 and their heritage will abide for
 ever;
 19 they are not put to shame in evil
 times,
 in the days of famine they have
 abundance.

20 But the wicked perish;
 the enemies of the LORD are like
 the glory of the pastures,
 they vanish—like smoke they
 vanish away.

21 The wicked borrows, and cannot
 pay back,
 but the righteous is generous and
 gives;
 22 for those blessed by the LORD shall
 possess the land,
 but those cursed by him shall be
 cut off.

23 The steps of a man are from the
 LORD,
 and he establishes him in whose
 way he delights;
 24 though he fall, he shall not be cast
 headlong,
 for the LORD is the stay of his
 hand.

25 I have been young, and now am old;
 yet I have not seen the righteous
 forsaken

or his children begging bread.
 26 He is ever giving liberally and
 lending,
 and his children become a
 blessing.

27 Depart from evil, and do good;
 so shall you abide for ever.
 28 For the LORD loves justice;
 he will not forsake his saints.

The righteous shall be preserved for
 ever,
 but the children of the wicked
 shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall possess the land,
 and dwell upon it for ever.

30 The mouth of the righteous utters
 wisdom,
 and his tongue speaks justice.

31 The law of his God is in his heart;
 his steps do not slip.

32 The wicked watches the righteous,
 and seeks to slay him.

33 The LORD will not abandon him to
 his power,
 or let him be condemned when he
 is brought to trial.

34 Wait for the LORD, and keep to his
 way,
 and he will exalt you to possess
 the land;
 you will look on the destruction
 of the wicked.

35 I have seen a wicked man
 overbearing,
 and towering like a cedar of
 Lebanon.^v

36 Again I^w passed by, and, lo, he was
 no more;
 though I sought him, he could not
 be found.

37 Mark the blameless man, and
 behold the upright,

^v Gk: Heb obscure ^w Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *he*

25: Compare Job 4.7. 28: *Saints*, see 30.4 n. 34: Not querulous anxiety, but patient waiting for the LORD to act (compare v. 9; 38.15; 62.1,5; 130.5; Is.40.31).

for there is posterity for the man
of peace.
³⁸ But transgressors shall be altogether
destroyed;
the posterity of the wicked shall
be cut off.

³⁹ The salvation of the righteous is
from the LORD;
he is their refuge in the time of
trouble.

⁴⁰ The LORD helps them and delivers
them;
he delivers them from the wicked,
and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

A Psalm of David, for the
memorial offering.

38 O LORD, rebuke me not in
thy anger,
nor chasten me in thy wrath!

² For thy arrows have sunk into me,
and thy hand has come down on
me.

³ There is no soundness in my flesh
because of thy indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.

⁴ For my iniquities have gone over
my head;
they weigh like a burden too
heavy for me.

⁵ My wounds grow foul and fester
because of my foolishness,

⁶ I am utterly bowed down and
prostrate;
all the day I go about mourning.

⁷ For my loins are filled with burning,

and there is no soundness in my
flesh.

⁸ I am utterly spent and crushed;
I groan because of the tumult of
my heart.

⁹ Lord, all my longing is known to
thee,
my sighing is not hidden from
thee.

¹⁰ My heart throbs, my strength fails
me;
and the light of my eyes—it also
has gone from me.

¹¹ My friends and companions stand
aloof from my plague,
and my kinsmen stand afar off.

¹² Those who seek my life lay their
snares,
those who seek my hurt speak of
ruin,
and meditate treachery all the
day long.

¹³ But I am like a deaf man, I do not
hear,
like a dumb man who does not
open his mouth.

¹⁴ Yea, I am like a man who does not
hear,
and in whose mouth are no
rebukes.

¹⁵ But for thee, O LORD, do I wait;
it is thou, O LORD my God, who
wilt answer.

¹⁶ For I pray, "Only let them not
rejoice over me,
who boast against me when my
foot slips!"

¹⁷ For I am ready to fall,
and my pain is ever with me.

Ps. 38: Prayer for healing in sickness (a lament). The psalmist's main concern is with some grave disease, but he is also troubled by enemies who are taking advantage of it. Their attack was made more plausible by the common belief that illness was a punishment for sin and therefore an indication that God was against the sick man (compare Ps. 22). **Title:** *Memorial offering*, Lev. 2.1–10; compare Lev. 24.7. **1:** Cry for help. **2–20:** The psalmist's situation. **2:** *Thy arrows*, Job 6.4; 16.12, 13. **3–10:** His disease. **3–4:** He acknowledges that the disease must be a deserved punishment for some sin he has committed, perhaps unwittingly (compare v. 18). **11:** His former friends avoid him as one forsaken by God. **12:** His enemies are circulating lies about him (compare vv. 19–20). **13–16:** But he is not really fretful; he is waiting for God to

- ¹⁸ I confess my iniquity,
I am sorry for my sin.
¹⁹ Those who are my foes without
cause^x are mighty,
and many are those who hate me
wrongfully.
²⁰ Those who render me evil for good
are my adversaries because I
follow after good.

- ²¹ Do not forsake me, O LORD!
O my God, be not far from me!
²² Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!

To the choirmaster: to Jeduthun.
A Psalm of David.

- 39** I said, "I will guard my ways,
that I may not sin with my
tongue;
I will bridle^y my mouth,
so long as the wicked are in my
presence."
² I was dumb and silent,
I held my peace to no avail;
my distress grew worse,
³ my heart became hot within me.
As I mused, the fire burned;
then I spoke with my tongue:
⁴ "LORD, let me know my end,
and what is the measure of my
days;
let me know how fleeting my life
is!
⁵ Behold, thou hast made my days a
few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is as nothing in
thy sight.

Surely every man stands as a mere
breath! *Selah*
⁶ Surely man goes about as a
shadow!
Surely for nought are they in
turmoil;
man heaps up, and knows not
who will gather!

- ⁷ "And now, Lord, for what do I
wait?
My hope is in thee.
⁸ Deliver me from all my
transgressions.
Make me not the scorn of the
fool!
⁹ I am dumb, I do not open my
mouth;
for it is thou who hast done it.
¹⁰ Remove thy stroke from me;
I am spent by the blows^z of thy
hand.
¹¹ When thou dost chasten man
with rebukes for sin,
thou dost consume like a moth what
is dear to him;
surely every man is a mere breath!
Selah

- ¹² "Hear my prayer, O LORD,
and give ear to my cry;
hold not thy peace at my tears!
For I am thy passing guest,
a sojourner, like all my
fathers.
¹³ Look away from me, that I may
know gladness,
before I depart and be no
more!"

^x Cn: Heb *living*
^y Heb *muzzle*
^z Heb *hostility*

act (compare 37.34). **18:** By confessing that he is a sinner, he hopes to be forgiven and healed (compare 32.3-5). **21-22:** Cry for help.

Ps. 39: Prayer for healing in sickness (a lament). 1-3: During his severe illness, which has almost shaken his faith in God's good-will, the psalmist has not made any public complaint because he did not wish to give encouragement to the wicked (i.e. the skeptical), who denied God's concern for justice and goodness (compare 10.4 and Ps.14). But now he can contain himself no longer; he must cry out, if only to God in private. **4-6:** He knows that all human life is short. **5:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. *Handbreadths*, a measure of about 3 inches (four fingers); compare Ezek.40.5; 43.13. **7-13:** Prayer for healing. **8:** *Deliver . . . from . . . transgressions*, i.e. heal the disease which they have caused (compare 32.1). **12-13:** He knows that, in any case, he has not long to live, but hopes for at least one more respite, however brief.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm
of David.

40 I waited patiently for the LORD;
he inclined to me and heard
my cry.

² He drew me up from the desolate
pit,^a

out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.

³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD.

⁴ Blessed is the man who makes
the LORD his trust,
who does not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false
gods!

⁵ Thou hast multiplied, O LORD my
God,
thy wondrous deeds and thy
thoughts toward us;
none can compare with thee!
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be
numbered.

⁶ Sacrifice and offering thou dost not
desire;
but thou hast given me an open
ear.^b

Burnt offering and sin offering
thou hast not required.

⁷ Then I said, "Lo, I come;
in the roll of the book it is written
of me;

⁸ I delight to do thy will, O my God;
thy law is within my heart."

⁹ I have told the glad news of
deliverance

in the great congregation;
lo, I have not restrained my lips,
as thou knowest, O LORD.

¹⁰ I have not hid thy saving help
within my heart,
I have spoken of thy faithfulness
and thy salvation;

I have not concealed thy steadfast
love and thy faithfulness
from the great congregation.

¹¹ Do not thou, O LORD, withhold
thy mercy from me,
let thy steadfast love and thy
faithfulness
ever preserve me!

¹² For evils have encompassed me
without number;
my iniquities have overtaken me,
till I cannot see;
they are more than the hairs of my
head;
my heart fails me.

¹³ Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me!
O LORD, make haste to help me!

¹⁴ Let them be put to shame and
confusion altogether
who seek to snatch away my life;
let them be turned back and brought
to dishonor
who desire my hurt!

¹⁵ Let them be appalled because of
their shame
who say to me, "Aha, Aha!"

¹⁶ But may all who seek thee
rejoice and be glad in thee;
may those who love thy salvation
say continually, "Great is the
LORD!"

¹⁷ As for me, I am poor and needy;

^a Cn: Heb *pit of tumult*

^b Heb *ears thou hast dug for me*

Ps. 40: Thanksgiving for deliverance from trouble, together with a prayer for help. A composite psalm: vv. 1–11 are a thanksgiving; vv. 12–17, a lament. Perhaps two originally independent units have been combined into a liturgy. **1–3:** The psalmist's experience (compare 18.4–6). The nature of his trouble is not specified. **4–10:** Fulfilment of his vow (see 7.17 n. and 22.22–31 n.). **6–8:** Rather than offer a formal sacrifice of thanksgiving, he pledges himself to do God's will. Quoted in Heb. 10.5–7. **6:** Compare 50.8–13; 51.16, 17; Am. 5.21–24; Hos. 6.6. **7:** *Roll of the book*, compare 56.8; 139.16. **9:** Compare 22.22. **11:** Prayer for continuing help. **12–17:** A lament. **12:** The psalmist's situation. **13–17:** Prayer for deliverance. This passage is almost identical with Ps. 70.

but the Lord takes thought for
me.
Thou art my help and my deliverer;
do not tarry, O my God!

To the choirmaster. A Psalm
of David.

41 Blessed is he who considers the
poor!^c
The LORD delivers him in the day
of trouble;
² the LORD protects him and keeps him
alive;
he is called blessed in the land;
thou dost not give him up to the
will of his enemies.
³ The LORD sustains him on his
sickbed;
in his illness thou healest all his
infirmities.^d

⁴ As for me, I said, "O LORD, be
gracious to me;
heal me, for I have sinned against
thee!"

⁵ My enemies say of me in malice:
"When will he die, and his name
perish?"

⁶ And when one comes to see me, he
utters empty words,
while his heart gathers mischief;
when he goes out, he tells it
abroad.

⁷ All who hate me whisper together
about me;
they imagine the worst for me.

⁸ They say, "A deadly thing has
fastened upon him;
he will not rise again from where
he lies."

⁹ Even my bosom friend in whom I
trusted,
who ate of my bread, has lifted
his heel against me.
¹⁰ But do thou, O LORD, be gracious to
me,
and raise me up, that I may
requite them!

¹¹ By this I know that thou art pleased
with me,
in that my enemy has not
triumphed over me.
¹² But thou hast upheld me because
of my integrity,
and set me in thy presence for
ever.

¹³ Blessed be the LORD, the God of
Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!
Amen and Amen.

BOOK II

To the choirmaster. A Maskil
of the Sons of Korah.

42 As a hart longs
for flowing streams,
so longs my soul
for thee, O God.
² My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and behold
the face of God?
³ My tears have been my food
day and night,
while men say to me continually,
"Where is your God?"

c Or weak d Heb thou changest all his bed

Ps. 41: Prayer for healing from sickness (a lament). **1-3:** Act of faith, in the style of the wisdom writers (compare Ps. 1). **4-9:** The psalmist's situation: he is mortally ill and his enemies are glad of it; even one of his best friends has turned against him. **10-12:** Prayer for deliverance. **13:** A doxology (no part of the psalm) marking the end of the first of the five books into which the Psalter was divided in imitation of the Pentateuch (compare 72.18-20; 89.52; 106.48).

Pss. 42-43: Prayer for healing in preparation for a pilgrimage (a lament). These two psalms are a single lyric consisting of three stanzas with a refrain (42.5,11; 43.5). The author, who lives in the far north of Palestine near Mount Hermon and the sources of the Jordan (42.6-7), has been prevented by illness (42.10) from making his accustomed pilgrimage to Jerusalem (42.4; 43.3-4). **42.1-4:** The psalmist's love for the temple and for God's presence there. **3:** Men

⁴ These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I went with the throng,
and led them in procession to the
house of God,
with glad shouts and songs of
thanksgiving,
a multitude keeping festival.
⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted
within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise
him,
my help ⁶ and my God.

My soul is cast down within me,
therefore I remember thee
from the land of Jordan and of
Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.

⁷ Deep calls to deep
at the thunder of thy cataracts;
all thy waves and thy billows
have gone over me.
⁸ By day the LORD commands his
steadfast love;
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I say to God, my rock:
"Why hast thou forgotten me?
Why go I mourning
because of the oppression of the
enemy?"

¹⁰ As with a deadly wound in my body,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me continually,
"Where is your God?"

¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within
me?
Hope in God; for I shall again
praise him,
my help and my God.

43 Vindicate me, O God, and
defend my cause
against an ungodly people;
from deceitful and unjust men
deliver me!

² For thou art the God in whom I take
refuge;
why hast thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning
because of the oppression of the
enemy?

³ Oh send out thy light and thy truth;
let them lead me,
let them bring me to thy holy hill
and to thy dwelling!

⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise thee with the lyre,
O God, my God.

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted
within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise
him,
my help and my God.

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the
Sons of Korah.

44 We have heard with our ears,
O God,
our fathers have told us,
what deeds thou didst perform in
their days,
in the days of old:

² thou with thy own hand didst drive
out the nations,
but them thou didst plant;
thou didst afflict the peoples,
but them thou didst set free;

³ for not by their own sword did they
win the land,
nor did their own arm give them
victory;

regard his sickness as evidence that God has forsaken him (compare 22.6-8). **42.5-10:** His present situation: he is sick and far from the temple. **6:** *Mount Mizar*, probably near Mount *Hermon*, but exact location is unknown. **43.1-4:** Prayer that, by the healing of his disease, he may be vindicated as a righteous man and enabled to go to Jerusalem.

Ps. 44: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a group lament). Israel has suffered a humiliating defeat at the hand of some unnamed foreign nation. **1-8:** God is reminded of the victories he had given Israel in previous times, from the days of the conquest onward. **3:** Dt.8.17;

- but thy right hand, and thy arm,
and the light of thy countenance;
for thou didst delight in them.
- ⁴ Thou art my King and my God,
who ordainest^e victories for
Jacob.
- ⁵ Through thee we push down our
foes;
through thy name we tread down
our assailants.
- ⁶ For not in my bow do I trust,
nor can my sword save me.
- ⁷ But thou hast saved us from our
foes,
and hast put to confusion those
who hate us.
- ⁸ In God we have boasted continually,
and we will give thanks to thy
name for ever. *Selah*
- ⁹ Yet thou hast cast us off and abased
us,
and hast not gone out with our
armies.
- ¹⁰ Thou hast made us turn back from
the foe;
and our enemies have gotten
spoil.
- ¹¹ Thou hast made us like sheep for
slaughter,
and hast scattered us among the
nations.
- ¹² Thou hast sold thy people for a
trifle,
demanding no high price for
them.
- ¹³ Thou hast made us the taunt of our
neighbors,
the derision and scorn of those
about us.
- ¹⁴ Thou hast made us a byword among
the nations,
a laughingstock^f among the
peoples.
- ¹⁵ All day long my disgrace is before
me,
and shame has covered my face,
- ¹⁶ at the words of the taunters and
revilers,
at the sight of the enemy and the
avenger.
- ¹⁷ All this has come upon us,
though we have not forgotten thee,
or been false to thy covenant.
- ¹⁸ Our heart has not turned back,
nor have our steps departed from
thy way,
- ¹⁹ that thou shouldst have broken us in
the place of jackals,
and covered us with deep
darkness.
- ²⁰ If we had forgotten the name of our
God,
or spread forth our hands to a
strange god,
- ²¹ would not God discover this?
For he knows the secrets of the
heart.
- ²² Nay, for thy sake we are slain all the
day long,
and accounted as sheep for the
slaughter.
- ²³ Rouse thyself! Why sleepest thou, O
Lord?
Awake! Do not cast us off for ever!
- ²⁴ Why dost thou hide thy face?
Why dost thou forget our affliction
and oppression?
- ²⁵ For our soul is bowed down to the
dust;
our body cleaves to the ground.
- ²⁶ Rise up, come to our help!
Deliver us for the sake of thy
steadfast love!

^e Gk Syr: Heb *Thou art my King, O God; ordain*
^f Heb *a shaking of the head*

Jg.7.2. **8:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **9-16:** Now God has allowed Israel to be defeated and shamed. **11:** *Thou . . . hast scattered us among the nations* seems appropriate only to the period after the Babylonian Exile, a circumstance which helps to date the poem. Some have put it as late as the Maccabean Age (second century B.C.). **17-22:** Defeat has not been the result of sin or apostasy, but of unshaken loyalty to the God of Israel. **23-26:** Cry for help (compare 78.65; Is.51.9). The language emphasizes the strong emotions of the speaker.

To the choirmaster: according to
Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of
Korah; a love song.

45 My heart overflows with a
goodly theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a
ready scribe.

² You are the fairest of the sons of
men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you for
ever.

³ Gird your sword upon your thigh, O
mighty one,
in your glory and majesty!

⁴ In your majesty ride forth
victoriously
for the cause of truth and to
defend^g the right;
let your right hand teach you
dread deeds!

⁵ Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.

⁶ Your divine throne^h endures for
ever and ever.
Your royal scepter is a scepter of
equity;

⁷ you love righteousness and hate
wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has
anointed you
with the oil of gladness above your
fellows;

⁸ your robes are all fragrant with
myrrh and aloes and cassia.
From ivory palaces stringed
instruments make you glad;

⁹ daughters of kings are among
your ladies of honor;
at your right hand stands the
queen in gold of Ophir.

¹⁰ Hear, O daughter, consider, and
incline your ear;
forget your people and your
father's house;

¹¹ and the king will desire your
beauty.

Since he is your lord, bow to him;

¹² the peopleⁱ of Tyre will sue your
favor with gifts,
the richest of the people ¹³ with all
kinds of wealth.

The princess is decked in her
chamber with gold-woven
robes;^j

¹⁴ in many-colored robes she is led
to the king,
with her virgin companions, her
escort,^k in her train.

¹⁵ With joy and gladness they are led
along
as they enter the palace of the
king.

¹⁶ Instead of your fathers shall be your
sons;
you will make them princes in all
the earth.

¹⁷ I will cause your name to be
celebrated in all generations;
therefore the peoples will praise
you for ever and ever.

^g Cn: Heb and the meekness of

^h Or *Your throne is a throne of God, or Thy throne, O God*

ⁱ Heb daughter

^j Or people. All glorious is the princess within, gold embroidery is her clothing

^k Heb those brought to you

Ps. 45: An ode for a royal wedding. 1: Introduction. The author identifies himself as a professional writer (*a ready scribe*), presumably a court poet. 2-9: He addresses the king in flattering language. 6: *Your divine throne* is more naturally translated (as in note *h*), *your throne, O God*, and is so quoted in Heb.1.8. 8: The mention of *ivory palaces* (1 Kg.22.39; Am.3.15) shows that the bridegroom was a king of the kingdom of Israel. 10-13a: The queen, probably a Phoenician (note the mention of *Tyre* in v. 12), is instructed to forget her own ancestry and be loyal to her husband. 13b-15: The wedding procession. 16-17: The poet promises the king (the pronouns, in Hebrew, are masculine) successful progeny and literary immortality.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamoth. A Song.

¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.^m
Selah

46 God is our refuge and strength, a very present^l help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God will help her right early.
⁶ The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.^m
Selah

⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has wrought desolations in the earth.

⁹ He makes war cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, he burns the chariots with fire!

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!"

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

47 Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

² For the LORD, the Most High, is terrible, a great king over all the earth.

⁸ He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

⁴ He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. *Selah*

⁵ God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

⁷ For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!ⁿ

⁸ God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.

⁹ The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham.

For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted!

*l Or well proved
m Or fortress
n Heb Maskil*

Ps. 46: A song of Zion celebrating God's ultimate victory over the nations. **1-3:** God will preserve his people even during the cosmic tumults of the latter days (compare Jl.3.16). **1:** This verse inspired Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress." **3:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **4-7:** Jerusalem, God's dwelling place on earth, will stand secure. This emphasis upon the Holy City leads to the classification of this and some other psalms as "songs of Zion" (for the term, see 137.3). **4:** *A river*, compare Is.33.21; Ezek.47.1-12; Zech.14.8; Rev.22.1-2. **7:** A refrain (compare v. 11); it has probably dropped out by accident after v. 3. **8-11:** The establishment of God's kingdom will bring peace to the earth (compare Is.2.4).

Ps. 47: A hymn celebrating God's enthronement as king of all nations. **1-4:** Summons to all the world to praise the God of Israel as king. **4:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **5-9:** These words were evidently composed to accompany a religious ceremony, probably connected with the ark, which dramatized the LORD's kingship (compare 24.7-10 and 68.17-18). **7:** The word translated "psalm" is Maskil; see Introduction. **8:** *Throne*, Is.6.1. **9:** *Shields*, rulers (compare 89.18 n.).

A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

48 Great is the LORD and greatly
to be praised
in the city of our God!
His holy mountain, ² beautiful in
elevation,
is the joy of all the earth,
Mount Zion, in the far north,
the city of the great King.
³ Within her citadels God
has shown himself a sure defense.

⁴ For lo, the kings assembled,
they came on together.
⁵ As soon as they saw it, they were
astounded,
they were in panic, they took to
flight;
⁶ trembling took hold of them there,
anguish as of a woman in travail.
⁷ By the east wind thou didst shatter
the ships of Tarshish.
⁸ As we have heard, so have we seen
in the city of the LORD of hosts,
in the city of our God,
which God establishes for ever.

Selah

⁹ We have thought on thy steadfast
love, O God,
in the midst of thy temple.
¹⁰ As thy name, O God,
so thy praise reaches to the ends of
the earth.
Thy right hand is filled with victory;
¹¹ let Mount Zion be glad!
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice
because of thy judgments!

¹² Walk about Zion, go round about
her,
number her towers,

¹³ consider well her ramparts,
go through her citadels;
that you may tell the next generation
¹⁴ that this is God,
our God for ever and ever.
He will be our guide for ever.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of
the Sons of Korah.

49 Hear this, all peoples!
Give ear, all inhabitants of
the world,
² both low and high,
rich and poor together!
³ My mouth shall speak wisdom;
the meditation of my heart shall
be understanding.
⁴ I will incline my ear to a proverb;
I will solve my riddle to the music
of the lyre.
⁵ Why should I fear in times of
trouble,
when the iniquity of my
persecutors surrounds me,
⁶ men who trust in their wealth
and boast of the abundance of
their riches?
⁷ Truly no man can ransom himself,^o
or give to God the price of his life,
⁸ for the ransom of his^p life is costly,
and can never suffice,
⁹ that he should continue to live on
for ever,
and never see the Pit.

¹⁰ Yea, he shall see that even the wise
die,

^o Another reading is *no man can ransom his brother*
^p Gk: Heb *their*

Ps. 48: A song celebrating the beauty and security of Zion. 1-3: The LORD is praised as the God of Jerusalem. 2: Mount Zion, one of the hills upon which Jerusalem is built. *In the far north*, a curious phrase which apparently identifies the Israelite holy mountain with the Canaanite mountain of the gods (called Zaphon or "North" in the Ras Shamra tablets). 4-8: When, in the last days, the heathen unite to attack God's city, they will be routed (compare Ezek. chs. 38-39; Zech. chs. 12; 14; Rev.20.9-10). 7: *Ships of Tarshish*, see 1 Kg.10.22 n. 8: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 9-11: All of this causes anticipatory rejoicing in the ceremonies of the temple. 12-14: Call for a procession about the city walls (Ps.24.7-10).

Ps. 49: Meditation on the transience of life and wealth (a wisdom psalm). 1: The poet summons his audience. 5-6: The theme: Why should one be afraid of wealthy, powerful men? 7-12: No man has power over the disposition of his own life, nor can he take his wealth with

A Psalm of Asaph.

- the fool and the stupid alike must
perish
and leave their wealth to others.
- 11 Their graves^a are their homes for
ever,
their dwelling places to all
generations,
though they named lands their
own.
- 12 Man cannot abide in his pomp,
he is like the beasts that perish.
- 13 This is the fate of those who have
foolish confidence,
the end of those^r who are pleased
with their portion. *Selah*
- 14 Like sheep they are appointed for
Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd;
straight to the grave they descend,^s
and their form shall waste away;
Sheol shall be their home.^t
- 15 But God will ransom my soul from
the power of Sheol,
for he will receive me. *Selah*
- 16 Be not afraid when one becomes
rich,
when the glory^u of his house
increases.
- 17 For when he dies he will carry
nothing away;
his glory^u will not go down after
him.
- 18 Though, while he lives, he counts
himself happy,
and though a man gets praise
when he does well for himself,
- 19 he will go to the generation of his
fathers,
who will never more see the
light.
- 20 Man cannot abide in his pomp,
he is like the beasts that
perish.

- 50 The Mighty One, God the
LORD,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its
setting.
- 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of
beauty,
God shines forth.
- 3 Our God comes, he does not keep
silence,
before him is a devouring fire,
round about him a mighty tempest.
- 4 He calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge
his people:
- 5 "Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by
sacrifice!"
- 6 The heavens declare his
righteousness,
for God himself is judge! *Selah*
- 7 "Hear, O my people, and I will
speak,
O Israel, I will testify against you.
I am God, your God.
- 8 I do not reprove you for your
sacrifices;
your burnt offerings are
continually before me.
- 9 I will accept no bull from your house,
nor he-goat from your folds.
- 10 For every beast of the forest is mine,
the cattle on a thousand hills.
- 11 I know all the birds of the air,^v
and all that moves in the field is
mine.
- 12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell
you;

^a Gk Syr Compare Tg: Heb *their inward* (thought)

^r Tg: Heb *after them*

^s Cn: Heb *the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning*

^t Heb *uncertain*

^u Or *wealth* ^v Gk Syr Tg: Heb *mountains*

him. 9: *The Pit*, Sheol (see 6.5 n.). 12: A refrain; compare v. 20. 13-14: Death is the end, even for the arrogant. 13: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 15: This might express the psalmist's assurance of his own immortality, but is perhaps better understood merely as confidence that he will be delivered from present trouble (89.48; Hos.13.14). 16-20: He instructs his audience therefore not to be afraid of the wealthy.

Ps. 50: A liturgy of divine judgment. 1-6: God coming to judge his people. 3: Compare 18.8; Hab.3.4. 6: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 7-23: The LORD's arraignment of the nation. 8-13: They have

- for the world and all that is in it is mine.
- ¹³ Do I eat the flesh of bulls,
or drink the blood of goats?
- ¹⁴ Offer to God a sacrifice of
thanksgiving,^w
and pay your vows to the Most
High;
- ¹⁵ and call upon me in the day of
trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall
glorify me."
- ¹⁶ But to the wicked God says:
"What right have you to recite my
statutes,
or take my covenant on your lips?
- ¹⁷ For you hate discipline,
and you cast my words behind
you.
- ¹⁸ If you see a thief, you are a friend
of his;
and you keep company with
adulterers.
- ¹⁹ "You give your mouth free rein for
evil,
and your tongue frames deceit:
- ²⁰ You sit and speak against your
brother;
you slander your own mother's
son.
- ²¹ These things you have done and I
have been silent;
you thought that I was one like
yourself.
But now I rebuke you, and lay the
charge before you.
- ²² "Mark this, then, you who forget
God,
lest I rend, and there be none to
deliver!
- ²³ He who brings thanksgiving as his
sacrifice honors me;
to him who orders his way aright
I will show the salvation of God!"
- To the choirmaster. A Psalm of
David, when Nathan the prophet
came to him, after he had gone
in to Bathsheba.
- 51** Have mercy on me, O God,
according to thy steadfast love;
according to thy abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my
iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against thee, thee only, have I
sinned,
and done that which is evil in thy
sight,
so that thou art justified in thy
sentence
and blameless in thy judgment.
- ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in
iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive
me.
- ⁶ Behold, thou desirest truth in the
inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my
secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be
clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter
than snow.
- ⁸ Fill^x me with joy and gladness;

w Or make thanksgiving your sacrifice to God
x Syr: Heb Make to hear

brought sacrifices in abundance, but this is not what God wants (see 40.6 n.). **14-15:** His demand is rather for thanksgiving and prayer. **16-21:** They have violated God's law by tolerating evil (v. 18) and indulging in slander (vv. 19-20). **16:** The first line is probably an editorial addition, modifying the poet's sweeping judgment on the nation as a whole. **22-23:** Concluding warning.

Ps. 51: Prayer for healing and moral renewal (a lament). **1-2:** Prayer for deliverance. Although v. 8 makes it clear that the psalmist's problem is one of illness, the main emphasis is upon restoration to moral, rather than merely physical, health. **3-5:** Confession of the psalmist that his nature has been sinful even from the moment of conception. **6-12:** Renewed prayer for deliverance. **7:** Purging with hyssop is a reference to some ceremony of sprinkling (Ex.12.22;

let the bones which thou hast
broken rejoice.

⁹ Hide thy face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right^y spirit
within me.

¹¹ Cast me not away from thy presence,
and take not thy holy Spirit from
me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of thy
salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors thy
ways,
and sinners will return to thee.

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness,^z O
God,
thou God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of
thy deliverance.

¹⁵ O Lord, open thou my lips,
and my mouth shall show forth
thy praise.

¹⁶ For thou hast no delight in sacrifice;
were I to give a burnt offering,
thou wouldst not be pleased.

¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God^a is
a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O
God, thou wilt not despise.

¹⁸ Do good to Zion in thy good
pleasure;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,

¹⁹ then wilt thou delight in right
sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt
offerings;
then bulls will be offered on thy
altar.

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of
David, when Doeg, the Edomite,
came and told Saul, "David has come
to the house of Ahimelech."

52 Why do you boast, O mighty
man,
of mischief done against the
godly?^b

All the day² you are plotting
destruction.

Your tongue is like a sharp razor,
you worker of treachery.

³ You love evil more than good,
and lying more than speaking the
truth. *Selah*

⁴ You love all words that devour,
O deceitful tongue.

⁵ But God will break you down for
ever;
he will snatch and tear you from
your tent;
he will uproot you from the land of
the living. *Selah*

⁶ The righteous shall see, and fear,
and shall laugh at him, saying,

⁷ "See the man who would not make
God his refuge,
but trusted in the abundance of his
riches,
and sought refuge in his wealth!"^c

⁸ But I am like a green olive tree
in the house of God.
I trust in the steadfast love of God
for ever and ever.

⁹ I will thank thee for ever,
because thou hast done it.
I will proclaim^d thy name, for it is
good,
in the presence of the godly.

^y Or steadfast ^z Or death

^a Or My sacrifice, O God

^b Cn Compare Syr: Heb the kindness of God

^c Syr Tg: Heb his destruction ^d Cn: Heb wait for

Lev.14.51), but in a purely metaphorical sense. **13-17:** The vow (see 7.17 n.) is to instruct others and to praise and serve God rather than to offer a sacrifice (see 40.6 n.). **14:** *Bloodguiltiness*, "death" (see note z) seems to give better sense. **18-19:** A later addition, designed to modify the anti-sacrificial spirit of the preceding verses and to adapt the psalm to liturgical use.

Ps. 52: God's imminent judgment against a tyrant (a lament). Prayer for deliverance in the form of a denunciation of the psalmist's enemy. **1-4:** Character of the psalmist's enemy. **3:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **5-7:** Retribution is about to befall his enemy. **8:** The psalmist is confident of his own deliverance (compare 1.3). **9:** The vow (see 7.17 n.). *Godly*, see 16.10 n.

To the choirmaster: according to
Mahalath. A Maskil of David.

53 The fool says in his heart,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt, doing abominable
iniquity;
there is none that does good.

² God looks down from heaven
upon the sons of men
to see if there are any that are wise,
that seek after God.

³ They have all fallen away;
they are all alike depraved;
there is none that does good,
no, not one.

⁴ Have those who work evil no
understanding,
who eat up my people as they eat
bread,
and do not call upon God?

⁵ There they are, in great terror,
in terror such as has not been!
For God will scatter the bones of
the ungodly;^e
they will be put to shame,^f for
God has rejected them.

⁶ O that deliverance for Israel would
come from Zion!
When God restores the fortunes of
his people,
Jacob will rejoice and Israel be
glad.

To the choirmaster: with stringed
instruments. A Maskil of David,
when the Ziphites went and
told Saul, "David is in hiding
among us."

54 Save me, O God, by thy name,
and vindicate me by thy might.

² Hear my prayer, O God;
give ear to the words of my mouth.

³ For insolent^g men have risen against
me,
ruthless men seek my life;
they do not set God before them.
Selah

⁴ Behold, God is my helper;
the Lord is the upholder^h of my
life.

⁵ He will requite my enemies with
evil;
in thy faithfulness put an end to
them.

⁶ With a freewill offering I will
sacrifice to thee;
I will give thanks to thy name, O
LORD, for it is good.

⁷ For thou hast delivered me from
every trouble,
and my eye has looked in triumph
on my enemies.

To the choirmaster: with stringed
instruments. A Maskil of David.

55 Give ear to my prayer, O God;
and hide not thyself from my
supplication!

² Attend to me, and answer me;
I am overcome by my trouble.
I am distraught³ by the noise of the
enemy,
because of the oppression of the
wicked.

For they bringⁱ trouble upon me,
and in anger they cherish enmity
against me.

⁴ My heart is in anguish within me,

^e Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb him who encamps against you

^f Gk: Heb you will put to shame

^g Another reading is strangers

^h Gk Syr Jerome: Heb of or with those who uphold

ⁱ Cn Compare Gk: Heb they cause to totter

Ps. 53: Condemnation of a cynical and unrighteous age. This Psalm is almost identical with Ps. 14, except for the alteration of the divine name Yahweh (the LORD) to Elohim (God).

Ps. 54: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1: Cry for help. 3: The psalmist's situation. *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 4-5: Expression of trust. 6-7: The vow (see 7.17 n.). 6: Freewill offering, Num. 15.3.

Ps. 55: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1-2: Cry for help. 3-14:

- the terrors of death have fallen
upon me.
- ⁵ Fear and trembling come upon me,
and horror overwhelms me.
- ⁶ And I say, "O that I had wings like
a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest;
⁷ yea, I would wander afar,
I would lodge in the wilderness,
Selah
- ⁸ I would haste to find me a shelter
from the raging wind and
tempest."
- ⁹ Destroy their plans,^j O Lord,
confuse their tongues;
for I see violence and strife in the
city.
- ¹⁰ Day and night they go around it
on its walls;
and mischief and trouble are within
it,
- ¹¹ ruin is in its midst;
oppression and fraud
do not depart from its market
place.
- ¹² It is not an enemy who taunts me—
then I could bear it;
it is not an adversary who deals
insolently with me—
then I could hide from him.
- ¹³ But it is you, my equal,
my companion, my familiar friend.
- ¹⁴ We used to hold sweet converse
together;
within God's house we walked in
fellowship.
- ¹⁵ Let death^k come upon them;
let them go down to Sheol alive;
let them go away in terror into
their graves.^l
- ¹⁶ But I call upon God;
and the LORD will save me.
- ¹⁷ Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,

- and he will hear my voice.
- ¹⁸ He will deliver my soul in safety
from the battle that I wage,
for many are arrayed against me.
- ¹⁹ God will give ear, and humble
them,
he who is enthroned from of old;
because they keep no law,^m
and do not fear God. *Selah*
- ²⁰ My companion stretched out his
hand against his friends,
he violated his covenant.
- ²¹ His speech was smoother than
butter,
yet war was in his heart;
his words were softer than oil,
yet they were drawn swords.
- ²² Cast your burdenⁿ on the LORD,
and he will sustain you;
he will never permit
the righteous to be moved.
- ²³ But thou, O God, wilt cast them
down
into the lowest pit;
men of blood and treachery
shall not live out half their days.
But I will trust in thee.

To the choirmaster: according to The
Dove on Far-off Terebinths. A Miktam
of David, when the Philistines seized
him in Gath.

- 56** Be gracious to me, O God, for
men trample upon me;
all day long foemen oppress me;
² my enemies trample upon me all
day long,
for many fight against me proudly.
- ³ When I am afraid,
I put my trust in thee.

^j Tg: Heb lacks their plans ^k Or desolations
^l Cn: Heb evils are in their habitation, in their midst
^m Or do not change ⁿ Or what he has given you

The psalmist's situation. His chief enemy is a former friend (vv. 12-14, 20-21). **7:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **15:** He curses his enemies. The violence of the language is probably an attempt to counteract the effect of a curse he believes they have put upon him (compare Ps. 58). *To Sheol alive*, compare Num. 16.30. **16-19:** Expression of trust. **20-23:** Complaint (vv. 20-21); confidence (vv. 22-23).

Ps. 56: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-2, 5-6ab:** The psalmist's

- ⁴ In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust without a fear.
What can flesh do to me?
- ⁵ All day long they seek to injure my
cause;
all their thoughts are against me
for evil.
- ⁶ They band themselves together,
they lurk,
they watch my steps.
As they have waited for my life,
⁷ so recompense^o them for their
crime;
in wrath cast down the peoples, O
God!
- ⁸ Thou hast kept count of my tossings;
put thou my tears in thy bottle!
Are they not in thy book?
- ⁹ Then my enemies will be turned
back
in the day when I call.
This I know, that^p God is for me.
- ¹⁰ In God, whose word I praise,
in the LORD, whose word I praise,
¹¹ in God I trust without a fear.
What can man do to me?
- ¹² My vows to thee I must perform, O
God;
I will render thank offerings to
thee.
- ¹³ For thou hast delivered my soul
from death,
yea, my feet from falling,
that I may walk before God
in the light of life.

To the choirmaster: according to Do
Not Destroy. A Mikdam of David, when
he fled from Saul, in the cave.

57 Be merciful to me, O God, be
merciful to me,

- for in thee my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of thy wings I will take
refuge,
till the storms of destruction pass
by.
- ² I cry to God Most High,
to God who fulfils his purpose for
me.
- ³ He will send from heaven and save
me,
he will put to shame those who
trample upon me. *Selah*
God will send forth his steadfast
love and his faithfulness!
- ⁴ I lie in the midst of lions
that greedily devour^q the sons of
men;
their teeth are spears and arrows,
their tongues sharp swords.
- ⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the
heavens!
Let thy glory be over all the earth!
- ⁶ They set a net for my steps;
my soul was bowed down.
They dug a pit in my way,
but they have fallen into it
themselves. *Selah*
- ⁷ My heart is steadfast, O God,
my heart is steadfast!
I will sing and make melody!
- ⁸ Awake, my soul!
Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will awake the dawn!
- ⁹ I will give thanks to thee, O Lord,
among the peoples;
I will sing praises to thee among
the nations.
- ¹⁰ For thy steadfast love is great to
the heavens,
thy faithfulness to the clouds.

^o Cn: Heb *deliver*
^p Or *because*
^q Cn: Heb *are aflame*

situation. **3-4,8-11**: Expression of trust. **6c-7**: Prayer for vindication. **7**: *The peoples*, a metaphor for the psalmist's enemies. **8**: *Thy book*, 40.7. **12-13**: The vow (see 7.17 n.).

Ps. 57: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1**: Cry for help. **2-3**: Expression of trust. **3**: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **4-6**: The psalmist's situation, his prayer and certainty of being heard. **5**: A refrain (compare v. 11). **7-11**: The customary vow (see 7.17 n.) in the form of a thanksgiving sung in anticipation of deliverance (compare 22.22-31). These verses are practically identical with 108.1-5.

¹¹ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!
Let thy glory be over all the earth!

To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David.

58 Do you indeed decree what is right, you gods?^s

Do you judge the sons of men uprightly?

² Nay, in your hearts you devise wrongs;
your hands deal out violence on earth.

³ The wicked go astray from the womb,
they err from their birth, speaking lies.

⁴ They have venom like the venom of a serpent,
like the deaf adder that stops its ear,

⁵ so that it does not hear the voice of charmers
or of the cunning enchanter.

⁶ O God, break the teeth in their mouths;
tear out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!

⁷ Let them vanish like water that runs away;
like grass let them be trodden down and wither.^t

⁸ Let them be like the snail which dissolves into slime,
like the untimely birth that never sees the sun.

⁹ Sooner than your pots can feel the heat of thorns,
whether green or ablaze, may he sweep them away!

¹⁰ The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance;
he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked.

¹¹ Men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous;
surely there is a God who judges on earth."

To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David, when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him.

59 Deliver me from my enemies,
O my God,
protect me from those who rise up against me,

² deliver me from those who work evil,
and save me from bloodthirsty men.

³ For, lo, they lie in wait for my life;
fierce men band themselves against me.

For no transgression or sin of mine,
O LORD,

⁴ for no fault of mine, they run and make ready.

Rouse thyself, come to my help, and see!

⁵ Thou, LORD God of hosts, art God of Israel.

Awake to punish all the nations;
spare none of those who treacherously plot evil. *Selah*

⁶ Each evening they come back,
howling like dogs
and prowling about the city.

⁷ There they are, bellowing with their mouths,

^s Or mighty lords ^t Cn: Heb uncertain

Ps. 58: Curse upon enemies (a lament). The violent language is probably to be explained as a curse which the psalmist utters to counteract the effect of a curse he believes his enemies have placed upon him (compare Ps.109.17-19). **1-5:** The character of his enemies. It is unclear whether they are heathen *gods* or "mighty lords" (note *s*); the translation of v. 1 is uncertain (compare 82.1). **6-9:** The curse. **10-11:** Deliverance is certain.

Ps. 59: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-2:** Cry for help. **3-7:** The psalmist's situation (and prayer, vv. 4b-5). **5:** *Nations*, see 56.7 n. *Selah*, see 3.2 n.

and snarling with^u their lips—
for “Who,” they think, “will hear
us?”

for thou, O God, art my fortress,
the God who shows me steadfast
love.

⁸ But thou, O LORD, dost laugh at
them;

thou dost hold all the nations in
derision.

⁹ O my Strength, I will sing praises to
thee;

for thou, O God, art my fortress.

¹⁰ My God in his steadfast love will
meet me;

my God will let me look in
triumph on my enemies.

¹¹ Slay them not, lest my people forget;
make them totter by thy power,
and bring them down,
O Lord, our shield!

¹² For the sin of their mouths, the
words of their lips,
let them be trapped in their pride.
For the cursing and lies which they
utter,

¹³ consume them in wrath,
consume them till they are no
more,

that men may know that God rules
over Jacob
to the ends of the earth. *Selah*

¹⁴ Each evening they come back,
howling like dogs
and prowling about the city.

¹⁵ They roam about for food,
and growl if they do not get their
fill.

¹⁶ But I will sing of thy might;
I will sing aloud of thy steadfast
love in the morning.

For thou hast been to me a fortress
and a refuge in the day of my
distress.

¹⁷ O my Strength, I will sing praises to
thee,

To the choirmaster: according to Shu-
shan Eduth. A Mikdam of David; for
instruction; when he strove with Aram-
naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and
when Joab on his return killed twelve
thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt.

60 O God, thou hast rejected us,
broken our defenses;
thou hast been angry; oh, restore
us.

² Thou hast made the land to quake,
thou hast rent it open;
repair its breaches, for it totters.

³ Thou hast made thy people suffer
hard things;
thou hast given us wine to drink
that made us reel.

⁴ Thou hast set up a banner for those
who fear thee,
to rally to it from the bow.”

Selah

⁵ That thy beloved may be delivered,
give victory by thy right hand
and answer us!

⁶ God has spoken in his sanctuary:^x
“With exultation I will divide up
Shechem
and portion out the Vale of
Succoth.

⁷ Gilead is mine; Manas’sseh is mine;
E’phraim is my helmet;
Judah is my scepter.

⁸ Moab is my washbasin;
upon Edom I cast my shoe;
over Philistia I shout in triumph.”

^u Cn: Heb swords in
^v Syr: Heb I will watch for thee
^w Gk Syr Jerome: Heb truth
^x Or by his holiness

8-10: Expression of trust. **11-15:** Appeal for vengeance. **12:** *Cursing*, see Ps. 58 n. **16-17:** The vow (see 7.17 n.).

Ps. 60: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a group lament). **1-3:** The people’s situation. They have suffered a humiliating defeat, probably by the Edomites (see v. 9). **4-5:** Prayer for deliverance. **4:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **5:** *Thy beloved*, either the nation or its king. **6-8:** The answer prayed for in v. 5—a divine oracle, probably delivered by a priest or temple prophet. The places referred to are either Hebrew territories or parts of the one-time Hebrew empire

- ⁹ Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
¹⁰ Hast thou not rejected us, O God?
Thou dost not go forth, O God,
with our armies.
¹¹ O grant us help against the foe,
for vain is the help of man!
¹² With God we shall do valiantly;
it is he who will tread down our
foes.

To the choirmaster: with stringed
instruments. A Psalm of David.

- 61** Hear my cry, O God,
listen to my prayer;
² from the end of the earth I call to
thee,
when my heart is faint.

Lead thou me
to the rock that is higher than I;
³ for thou art my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.

⁴ Let me dwell in thy tent for ever!
Oh to be safe under the shelter of
thy wings! *Selah*
⁵ For thou, O God, hast heard my
vows,
thou hast given me the heritage of
those who fear thy name.

⁶ Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all
generations!
⁷ May he be enthroned for ever before
God;
bid steadfast love and faithfulness
watch over him!

⁸ So will I ever sing praises to thy
name,

as I pay my vows day after day.

To the choirmaster: according to
Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

- 62** For God alone my soul waits in
silence;
from him comes my salvation.
² He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly
moved.

³ How long will you set upon a man
to shatter him, all of you,
like a leaning wall, a tottering
fence?
⁴ They only plan to thrust him down
from his eminence.
They take pleasure in falsehood.
They bless with their mouths,
but inwardly they curse. *Selah*

⁵ For God alone my soul waits in
silence,
for my hope is from him.
⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
⁷ On God rests my deliverance and
my honor;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

⁹ Men of low estate are but a breath,
men of high estate are a delusion;
in the balances they go up;
they are together lighter than a
breath.
¹⁰ Put no confidence in extortion,
set no vain hopes on robbery;
if riches increase, set not your
heart on them.

under the United Monarchy. The God of Israel lays claim to them all. **9-12:** Prayer for victory.
9: *Me*, probably the king. *The fortified city*, perhaps Sela, Edom's capital.

Ps. 61: Prayer for protection (a lament). **1-2:** Cry for help. **2:** *From the end of the earth* seems to show that the psalmist did not live in Palestine. **3-5:** Expression of trust. **4:** *Thy tent*, see 27.6 n. The psalmist is perhaps preparing to make a pilgrimage. *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **6-7:** Prayer for the king, the guarantor of safety for pilgrims and others. **8:** The vow (see 7.17 n.).

Ps. 62: Confidence in God's protection (a song of trust; see Ps. 11 n.). **1-2, 5-7:** God is the psalmist's only help. **3-4:** The psalmist's situation: he is cursed by enemies. **8-12:** He instructs his compatriots to trust in God also.

- ¹¹ Once God has spoken;
twice have I heard this:
that power belongs to God;
¹² and that to thee, O Lord, belongs
steadfast love.
For thou dost requite a man
according to his work.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the
Wilderness of Judah.

- 63** O God, thou art my God, I seek
thee,
my soul thirsts for thee;
my flesh faints for thee,
as in a dry and weary land where
no water is.
² So I have looked upon thee in the
sanctuary,
beholding thy power and glory.
³ Because thy steadfast love is better
than life,
my lips will praise thee.
⁴ So I will bless thee as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on
thy name.
⁵ My soul is feasted as with marrow
and fat,
and my mouth praises thee with
joyful lips,
⁶ when I think of thee upon my bed,
and meditate on thee in the
watches of the night;
⁷ for thou hast been my help,
and in the shadow of thy wings I
sing for joy.
⁸ My soul clings to thee;
thy right hand upholds me.
⁹ But those who seek to destroy my
life
shall go down into the depths of
the earth;
¹⁰ they shall be given over to the power
of the sword,

- they shall be prey for jackals.
¹¹ But the king shall rejoice in God;
all who swear by him shall glory;
for the mouths of liars will be
stopped.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 64** Hear my voice, O God, in my
complaint;
preserve my life from dread of the
enemy,
² hide me from the secret plots of the
wicked,
from the scheming of evildoers,
³ who whet their tongues like swords,
who aim bitter words like arrows,
⁴ shooting from ambush at the
blameless,
shooting at him suddenly and
without fear.
⁵ They hold fast to their evil purpose;
they talk of laying snares secretly,
thinking, "Who can see us?"
⁶ Who can search out our crimes?^z
We have thought out a cunningly
conceived plot."
For the inward mind and heart of
a man are deep!
⁷ But God will shoot his arrow at
them;
they will be wounded suddenly.
⁸ Because of their tongue he will bring
them to ruin;^a
all who see them will wag their
heads.
⁹ Then all men will fear;
they will tell what God has
wrought,
and ponder what he has done.
¹⁰ Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD,

^y Syr: Heb *them*

^z Cn: Heb *they search out crimes*

^a Cn: Heb *They will bring him to ruin, their tongue being against them*

Ps. 63: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament; though this psalm may also be classified as a song of trust, see vv. 9–10). The psalmist's almost mystical delight in God's presence nearly obscures his sense of need for personal security (compare 73.23–28). **1:** Compare 42.1–2. **6:** See 3.5–6 n. The night was divided into three *watches*. **11:** *The king*, see 61.6–7 n.

Ps. 64: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1–2:** Cry for help. **3–6:** The psalmist's situation. **3:** *Bitter words*, perhaps magical curses (compare Ps. 58 n.). **7–9:** Expression of confidence. **10:** Concluding prayer.

and take refuge in him!
Let all the upright in heart glory!

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.
A Song.

65 Praise is due to thee,
O God, in Zion;
and to thee shall vows be performed,
² O thou who hearest prayer!
To thee shall all flesh come
³ on account of sins.
When our transgressions prevail over
us,^b
thou dost forgive them.
⁴ Blessed is he whom thou dost choose
and bring near,
to dwell in thy courts!
We shall be satisfied with the
goodness of thy house,
thy holy temple!

⁵ By dread deeds thou dost answer us
with deliverance,
O God of our salvation,
who art the hope of all the ends of the
earth,
and of the farthest seas;
⁶ who by thy strength hast established
the mountains,
being girded with might;
⁷ who dost still the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
the tumult of the peoples;
⁸ so that those who dwell at earth's
farthest bounds
are afraid at thy signs;
thou makest the outgoings of the
morning and the evening
to shout for joy.

⁹ Thou visitest the earth and waterest
it,
thou greatly enrichest it;
the river of God is full of water;
thou providest their grain,
for so thou hast prepared it.

¹⁰ Thou waterest its furrows
abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.
¹¹ Thou crownest the year with thy
bounty;
the tracks of thy chariot drip with
fatness.
¹² The pastures of the wilderness drip,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
¹³ the meadows clothe themselves with
flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with
grain,
they shout and sing together for
joy.

To the choirmaster. A Song. A Psalm.

66 Make a joyful noise to God, all
the earth;
² sing the glory of his name;
give to him glorious praise!
³ Say to God, "How terrible are thy
deeds!
So great is thy power that thy
enemies cringe before thee.
⁴ All the earth worships thee;
they sing praises to thee,
sing praises to thy name." *Selah*
⁵ Come and see what God has done:
he is terrible in his deeds among
men.
⁶ He turned the sea into dry land;
men passed through the river on
foot.
There did we rejoice in him,
⁷ who rules by his might for ever,
whose eyes keep watch on the
nations—
let not the rebellious exalt
themselves. *Selah*

⁸ Bless our God, O peoples,

^b Gk: Heb me

Ps. 65: Thanksgiving for a good harvest. 1-5: It is good to gather at the temple to sing God's praises. **6-8:** It was he who created the world. **9-13:** And it is he who makes the earth fertile. **9:** 104.13. *River of God*, see Ps.46.4 n.

Ps. 66: Liturgy of praise and thanksgiving. 1-12: Hymn in praise of God's might and his care for his people. **4:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **13-20:** An individual presents a thanksgiving sacrifice in

let the sound of his praise be heard,
⁹ who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip.
¹⁰ For thou, O God, hast tested us; thou hast tried us as silver is tried.
¹¹ Thou didst bring us into the net; thou didst lay affliction on our loins;
¹² thou didst let men ride over our heads;
 we went through fire and through water;
 yet thou hast brought us forth to a spacious place.^c
¹³ I will come into thy house with burnt offerings;
 I will pay thee my vows,
¹⁴ that which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.
¹⁵ I will offer to thee burnt offerings of fatlings,
 with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;
 I will make an offering of bulls and goats. *Selah*
¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God,
 and I will tell what he has done for me.
¹⁷ I cried aloud to him,
 and he was extolled with my tongue.
¹⁸ If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
 the Lord would not have listened.
¹⁹ But truly God has listened;
 he has given heed to the voice of my prayer.
²⁰ Blessed be God,
 because he has not rejected my prayer

or removed his steadfast love from me!

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

67 May God be gracious to us and bless us
 and make his face to shine upon us, *Selah*
² that thy way may be known upon earth,
 thy saving power among all nations.
³ Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
 let all the peoples praise thee!
⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
 for thou dost judge the peoples with equity
 and guide the nations upon earth. *Selah*
⁵ Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
 let all the peoples praise thee!
⁶ The earth has yielded its increase;
 God, our God, has blessed us.
⁷ God has blessed us;
 let all the ends of the earth fear him!

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song.

68 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered;
 let those who hate him flee before him!
² As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;
 as wax melts before fire,

^c Cn Compare Gk Syr Jerome Tg: Heb saturation

fulfilment of a vow (7.17). **13-15:** Announcement of the worshiper's purpose. **16-19:** The story of his experience (see 18.4-6 n.). **20:** Concluding act of praise.

Ps. 67: Thanksgiving for a good harvest (see v. 6). **1-2:** Prayer that the blessing may continue (compare Num.6.25). *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **3-5:** May other nations know that Israel's God is Lord of all! **6-7:** The occasion of the psalm.

Ps. 68: Liturgy for a festival celebration in the temple. This is the most difficult of the psalms to interpret, and there is no general agreement either as to its meaning as a whole or in many of its details. Some scholars regard it as merely a collection of unrelated fragments. **1-3:** Prayer

let the wicked perish before God!
³ But let the righteous be joyful;
 let them exult before God;
 let them be jubilant with joy!

⁴ Sing to God, sing praises to his
 name;
 lift up a song to him who rides
 upon the clouds;^d
 his name is the LORD, exult before
 him!

⁵ Father of the fatherless and
 protector of widows
 is God in his holy habitation.

⁶ God gives the desolate a home to
 dwell in;
 he leads out the prisoners to
 prosperity;
 but the rebellious dwell in a
 parched land.

⁷ O God, when thou didst go forth
 before thy people,
 when thou didst march through
 the wilderness, *Selah*

⁸ the earth quaked, the heavens
 poured down rain,
 at the presence of God;
 yon Sinai quaked at the presence
 of God,
 the God of Israel.

⁹ Rain in abundance, O God, thou
 didst shed abroad;
 thou didst restore thy heritage as
 it languished;

¹⁰ thy flock found a dwelling in it;
 in thy goodness, O God, thou didst
 provide for the needy.

¹¹ The Lord gives the command;
 great is the host of those who bore
 the tidings:

¹² "The kings of the armies, they
 flee, they flee!"

The women at home divide the spoil,

¹³ though they stay among the
 sheepfolds—
 the wings of a dove covered with
 silver,
 its pinions with green gold.
¹⁴ When the Almighty scattered kings
 there,
 snow fell on Zalmon.

¹⁵ O mighty mountain, mountain of
 Bashan;
 O many-peaked mountain,
 mountain of Bashan!

¹⁶ Why look you with envy, O
 many-peaked mountain,
 at the mount which God desired
 for his abode,
 yea, where the LORD will dwell
 for ever?

¹⁷ With mighty chariotry, twice ten
 thousand,
 thousands upon thousands,
 the Lord came from Sinai into the
 holy place.^e

¹⁸ Thou didst ascend the high mount,
 leading captives in thy train,
 and receiving gifts among men,
 even among the rebellious, that the
 LORD God may dwell there.

¹⁹ Blessed be the Lord,
 who daily bears us up;
 God is our salvation. *Selah*

²⁰ Our God is a God of salvation;
 and to God, the Lord, belongs
 escape from death.

²¹ But God will shatter the heads of his
 enemies,
 the hairy crown of him who walks
 in his guilty ways.

²² The Lord said,

*d Or cast up a highway for him who rides through the
 deserts*

e Cn: Heb The Lord among them Sinai in the holy place

for God to manifest himself in battle (compare v. 1 with Num.10.35). 4-6: Praise to God as helper of the helpless. 7-10: God's care for his people in time past (compare vv. 7-8 with Jg.5.4-5). 7: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 11-14: Announcement of a great victory. 13: *The wings of a dove* . . . , presumably describes some treasure found among the spoil. 14: An incident otherwise unknown. 15-16: Praise of the mount of God (Zion). 15: *Bashan*, a region east of the Sea of Galilee. 17-18: God ascends his throne in the temple (compare 47.5). 19-20: Praise of the God who daily delivers his people. 21: Expression of certainty that God will give victory to his

"I will bring them back from Bashan,
I will bring them back from the depths of the sea,
23 that you may bathe^f your feet in blood,
that the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from the foe."

24 Thy solemn processions are seen,^g
O God,
the processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary—
25 the singers in front, the minstrels last,
between them maidens playing timbrels:

26 "Bless God in the great congregation,
the LORD, O you who are of Israel's fountain!"

27 There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead,
the princes of Judah in their throng,
the princes of Zeb'ulun, the princes of Naph'tali.

28 Summon thy might, O God;
show thy strength, O God, thou who hast wrought for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem kings bear gifts to thee.

30 Rebuke the beasts that dwell among the reeds,
the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples.

Trample^h under foot those who lust after tribute;
scatter the peoples who delight in war.ⁱ

31 Let bronze be brought from Egypt;
let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out her hands to God.

32 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;
sing praises to the Lord, *Selah*
33 to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens;
lo, he sends forth his voice, his mighty voice.

34 Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel, and his power is in the skies.

35 Terrible is God in his^j sanctuary, the God of Israel,
he gives power and strength to his people.

Blessed be God!

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies.
A Psalm of David.

69 Save me, O God!
For the waters have come up to my neck.

2 I sink in deep mire,
where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters,
and the flood sweeps over me.

3 I am weary with my crying;
my throat is parched.
My eyes grow dim
with waiting for my God.

4 More in number than the hairs of my head
are those who hate me without cause;
mighty are those who would destroy me,
those who attack me with lies.
What I did not steal
must I now restore?

5 O God, thou knowest my folly;
the wrongs I have done are not hidden from thee.

^f Gk Syr Tg: Heb *shatter*

^g Or *have been seen* ^h Cn: Heb *trampling*

ⁱ The Hebrew of verse 30 is obscure

^j Gk: Heb *from thy*

people. 24–27: A procession enters the temple (see 24.7–10 n.). 27: The reason for the mention of just these four tribes—the first two from the south, the other two from Galilee—is uncertain. Benjamin was the tribe of Saul; Judah, of David. 28–31: Prayer for victory against Egypt (the beasts . . . among the reeds, v. 30). 32–35: Hymn to the God of heaven. 33: 18.10–13.

Ps. 69: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1–4: Cry for help. The language in vv. 2–3 is metaphorical. 5: Confession of sin (compare 32.3–5; 51.3–5). 6: The prayer

- ⁶ Let not those who hope in thee be put to shame through me,
O LORD GOD of hosts;
let not those who seek thee be brought to dishonor through me,
O God of Israel.
- ⁷ For it is for thy sake that I have borne reproach,
that shame has covered my face.
- ⁸ I have become a stranger to my brethren,
an alien to my mother's sons.
- ⁹ For zeal for thy house has consumed me,
and the insults of those who insult thee have fallen on me.
- ¹⁰ When I humbled^k my soul with fasting,
it became my reproach.
- ¹¹ When I made sackcloth my clothing,
I became a byword to them.
- ¹² I am the talk of those who sit in the gate,
and the drunkards make songs about me.
- ¹³ But as for me, my prayer is to thee, O LORD.
At an acceptable time, O God,
in the abundance of thy steadfast love answer me.
With thy faithful help ¹⁴ rescue me from sinking in the mire;
let me be delivered from my enemies
and from the deep waters.
- ¹⁵ Let not the flood sweep over me,
or the deep swallow me up,
or the pit close its mouth over me.
- ¹⁶ Answer me, O LORD, for thy steadfast love is good;
according to thy abundant mercy, turn to me.
- ¹⁷ Hide not thy face from thy servant;
for I am in distress, make haste to answer me.
- ¹⁸ Draw near to me, redeem me,
set me free because of my enemies!
- ¹⁹ Thou knowest my reproach,
and my shame and my dishonor;
my foes are all known to thee.
- ²⁰ Insults have broken my heart,
so that I am in despair.
I looked for pity, but there was none;
and for comforters, but I found none.
- ²¹ They gave me poison for food,
and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
- ²² Let their own table before them become a snare;
let their sacrificial feasts^l be a trap.
- ²³ Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see;
and make their loins tremble continually.
- ²⁴ Pour out thy indignation upon them,
and let thy burning anger overtake them.
- ²⁵ May their camp be a desolation,
let no one dwell in their tents.
- ²⁶ For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten,
and him^m whom thou hast wounded, they afflict still more.ⁿ
- ²⁷ Add to them punishment upon punishment;
may they have no acquittal from thee.
- ²⁸ Let them be blotted out of the book of the living;
let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

^k Gk Syr: Heb *I wept with fasting my soul or I made my soul mourn with fasting*

^l Tg: Heb *for security*

^m One Ms Tg Compare Syr: Heb *those*

ⁿ Gk Syr: Heb *recount the pain of*

continued. 7–21: The psalmist's situation. He may have been, like Haggai and Zechariah, a zealot for the rebuilding of the temple after the Exile (compare v. 9 with vv. 35–36; see also Ezra.4.1–5,23–24; 5.2–3), and thus have aroused opposition. 9: Quoted in Jn.2.17. 13–18: His deep emotions force him to interrupt the narrative with a prayer. 21: Quoted in all the gospels (Mt.27.34,48; Mk.15.36; Lk.23.36; Jn.19.29). 22–28: Curse upon his enemies (see Ps. 58 n.). 25: Quoted in Acts 1.20. 29: Exclamatory prayer. 30–36: Thanksgiving for a favorable answer.

²⁹ But I am afflicted and in pain;
let thy salvation, O God, set me
on high!

³ Let them be appalled because of
their shame
who say, "Aha, Aha!"

³⁰ I will praise the name of God with a
song;
I will magnify him with
thanksgiving.

³¹ This will please the LORD more than
an ox
or a bull with horns and hoofs.

³² Let the oppressed see it and be glad;
you who seek God, let your hearts
revive.

³³ For the LORD hears the needy,
and does not despise his own that
are in bonds.

³⁴ Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and everything that moves
therein.

³⁵ For God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah;
and his servants shall dwell^o there
and possess it;

³⁶ the children of his servants shall
inherit it,
and those who love his name shall
dwell in it.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David,
for the memorial offering.

70 Be pleased, O God, to deliver
me!

O LORD, make haste to help me!

² Let them be put to shame and
confusion
who seek my life!

Let them be turned back and brought
to dishonor
who desire my hurt!

⁴ May all who seek thee
rejoice and be glad in thee!
May those who love thy salvation
say evermore, "God is great!"

⁵ But I am poor and needy;
hasten to me, O God!
Thou art my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not tarry!

71 In thee, O LORD, do I take
refuge;

let me never be put to shame!

² In thy righteousness deliver me and
rescue me;

incline thy ear to me, and save
me!

³ Be thou to me a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress,^p to save me,
for thou art my rock and my
fortress.

⁴ Rescue me, O my God, from the
hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and
cruel man.

⁵ For thou, O Lord, art my hope,
my trust, O LORD, from my
youth.

⁶ Upon thee I have leaned from my
birth;
thou art he who took me from my
mother's womb.
My praise is continually of thee.

⁷ I have been as a portent to many;
but thou art my strong refuge.

⁸ My mouth is filled with thy praise,
and with thy glory all the day.

^o Syr: Heb and they shall dwell

^p Gk Compare 31.3: Heb to come continually thou hast
commanded

A priest or temple prophet may have delivered an oracle of assurance between v. 29 and v. 30 (see 12.5 n. and 20.5 n.). **30-31**: Like the authors of Pss. 40 (vv. 6-8); 50 (vv. 8-13); and 51 (vv. 16-17), the psalmist prefers to offer a hymn of thanksgiving. **35-36**: If these verses are not a later addition, they show the psalm to be post-exilic (compare 51.18-19).

Ps. 70: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). This psalm is practically identical with 40.13-17.

Ps. 71: An old man's prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-8**: Cry for help, mingled with expressions of trust. **5-6**: In all his previous life, God has never failed him.

- ⁹ Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
forsake me not when my strength is spent.
- ¹⁰ For my enemies speak concerning me,
those who watch for my life consult together,
- ¹¹ and say, "God has forsaken him;
pursue and seize him,
for there is none to deliver him."
- ¹² O God, be not far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
- ¹³ May my accusers be put to shame
and consumed;
with scorn and disgrace may they be covered
who seek my hurt.
- ¹⁴ But I will hope continually,
and will praise thee yet more and more.
- ¹⁵ My mouth will tell of thy righteous acts,
of thy deeds of salvation all the day,
for their number is past my knowledge.
- ¹⁶ With the mighty deeds of the Lord
GOD I will come,
I will praise thy righteousness,
thine alone.
- ¹⁷ O God, from my youth thou hast taught me,
and I still proclaim thy wondrous deeds.
- ¹⁸ So even to old age and gray hairs,
O God, do not forsake me,
till I proclaim thy might
to all the generations to come.^a
Thy power ¹⁹ and thy righteousness,
O God,
reach the high heavens.

Thou who hast done great things,

- O God, who is like thee?
- ²⁰ Thou who hast made me see many
sore troubles
wilt revive me again;
from the depths of the earth
thou wilt bring me up again.
- ²¹ Thou wilt increase my honor,
and comfort me again.
- ²² I will also praise thee with the harp
for thy faithfulness, O my God;
I will sing praises to thee with the lyre,
O Holy One of Israel.
- ²³ My lips will shout for joy,
when I sing praises to thee;
my soul also, which thou hast rescued.
- ²⁴ And my tongue will talk of thy
righteous help
all the day long,
for they have been put to shame and disgraced
who sought to do me hurt.

A Psalm of Solomon.

- 72** Give the king thy justice, O
God,
and thy righteousness to the royal son!
- ² May he judge thy people with
righteousness,
and thy poor with justice!
- ³ Let the mountains bear prosperity
for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness!
- ⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor
of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor!
- ⁵ May he live^r while the sun endures,

^a Gk Compare Syr: Heb to a generation, to all that come
^r Gk: Heb may they fear thee

9-11: The psalmist's situation: he has violent enemies and his age is a disadvantage to him (compare v. 18). **12-13:** Prayer for vindication. **14-24:** The vow (see 7.17 n.). If the prayer is answered, he will use his musical talents (v. 22) to celebrate God's saving acts (vv. 15-16) so that future generations will know of them (v. 18). **20:** From the depths of the earth, compare 9.13; 30.3.

Ps. 72: Prayer for God's blessing on the king. The occasion for the psalm may have been a coronation or its annual commemoration. **1-4:** The king is to be the guarantor of justice for the

- and as long as the moon,
throughout all generations!
- ⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the
mown grass,
like showers that water the earth!
- ⁷ In his days may righteousness
flourish,
and peace abound, till the moon
be no more!
- ⁸ May he have dominion from sea to
sea,
and from the River to the ends of
the earth!
- ⁹ May his foes^s bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust!
- ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the
isles
render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba
bring gifts!
- ¹¹ May all kings fall down before him,
all nations serve him!
- ¹² For he delivers the needy when he
calls,
the poor and him who has no
helper.
- ¹³ He has pity on the weak and the
needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
- ¹⁴ From oppression and violence he
redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his
sight.
- ¹⁵ Long may he live,
may gold of Sheba be given to him!
May prayer be made for him
continually,

- and blessings invoked for him all
the day!
- ¹⁶ May there be abundance of grain in
the land;
on the tops of the mountains may
it wave;
may its fruit be like Lebanon;
and may men blossom forth from the
cities
like the grass of the field!
- ¹⁷ May his name endure for ever,
his fame continue as long as the
sun!
May men bless themselves by him,
all nations call him blessed!
- ¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God of
Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
- ¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name for
ever;
may his glory fill the whole earth!
Amen and Amen!
- ²⁰ The prayers of David, the son of
Jesse, are ended.

BOOK III

A Psalm of Asaph.

- 73** Truly God is good to the
upright,
to those who are pure in heart.^t
- ² But as for me, my feet had almost
stumbled,

^s Cn: Heb *those who dwell in the wilderness*
^t Or Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in
heart

helpless (vv. 12–15). **5–6:** These verses suggest the supernatural aura which surrounded the person of the king in the thought of the ancient Near East (even in Israel he could be called “God’s son,” see 2.7). The health, fertility, and success of the nation were bound up inextricably in those of its monarch. **7:** *Righteousness* and *peace*, as frequently elsewhere, mean “right conditions” and “prosperity.” **8–11:** The king’s ideal universal empire. These verses suggested the ascription of the psalm to Solomon. **8:** *The River*, the Euphrates (1 Kg.4.21). **10:** *Tarshish*, in the western Mediterranean. *Sheba and Seba*, in south Arabia. **12–14:** The character of the king. **15–17:** The prayer concluded. **18–19:** A doxology (no part of the psalm) marking the end of Book II of the Psalter (see 41.13 n.). **20:** An editorial colophon to one of the collections of psalms now included in the Psalter.

Ps. 73: Meditation on the justice of God (a wisdom psalm). The problem is the same as that of the book of Job: How can one reconcile the belief that God is just with the apparent inequities in his government of the world? (compare Ps. 37). **1:** Both a confession of faith and a

my steps had well nigh slipped.
³ For I was envious of the arrogant,
 when I saw the prosperity of the
 wicked.
⁴ For they have no pangs;
 their bodies are sound and sleek.
⁵ They are not in trouble as other men
 are;
 they are not stricken like other
 men.
⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace;
 violence covers them as a
 garment.
⁷ Their eyes swell out with fatness,
 their hearts overflow with follies.
⁸ They scoff and speak with malice;
 loftily they threaten oppression.
⁹ They set their mouths against the
 heavens,
 and their tongue struts through the
 earth.
¹⁰ Therefore the people turn and praise
 them;^u
 and find no fault in them.^v
¹¹ And they say, "How can God know?
 Is there knowledge in the Most
 High?"
¹² Behold, these are the wicked;
 always at ease, they increase in
 riches.
¹³ All in vain have I kept my heart
 clean
 and washed my hands in
 innocence.
¹⁴ For all the day long I have been
 stricken,
 and chastened every morning.
¹⁵ If I had said, "I will speak thus,"

I would have been untrue to the
 generation of thy children.
¹⁶ But when I thought how to
 understand this,
 it seemed to me a wearisome task,
¹⁷ until I went into the sanctuary of
 God;
 then I perceived their end.
¹⁸ Truly thou dost set them in slippery
 places;
 thou dost make them fall to ruin.
¹⁹ How they are destroyed in a
 moment,
 swept away utterly by terrors!
²⁰ They are^w like a dream when one
 awakes,
 on awaking you despise their
 phantoms.
²¹ When my soul was embittered,
 when I was pricked in heart,
²² I was stupid and ignorant,
 I was like a beast toward thee.
²³ Nevertheless I am continually with
 thee;
 thou dost hold my right hand.
²⁴ Thou dost guide me with thy
 counsel,
 and afterward thou wilt receive
 me to glory.^x
²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but thee?
 And there is nothing upon earth
 that I desire besides thee.
²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail,
 but God is the strength^y of my
 heart and my portion for ever.
²⁷ For lo, those who are far from thee
 shall perish;

^u Cn: Heb his people return hither

^v Cn: Heb abundant waters are drained by them

^w Cn: Heb Lord ^x Or honor ^y Heb rock

thesis to be debated. **2-16:** The psalmist's experience and the grounds for his doubt. **2:** He had nearly lost his faith. **3-12:** Cynical, wicked men seemed to grow fat on their crimes (in sharp contradiction of such promises as Ps.1.4-6 or Dt.28.15-19; compare Job ch. 21). **11:** Their indifference to morality was grounded in a skeptical attitude toward God (10.4; 14.1). **13-16:** The psalmist's immediate, impulsive reaction. **13:** If wickedness is not punished, why be good? **14:** His efforts to be righteous brought him only suffering. **15:** This is what he was tempted to say, but had refrained from doing so because of the effect it might have on others (39.1). **16:** He found no answer to the problem in his private cogitations. **17-28:** It was only when he went to the temple to seek God's help that a satisfying answer came to him. **17-22:** First of all, he saw that the prosperity of the wicked is only temporary (compare Ps. 37). **21-22:** His previous attitude had been foolish and obtuse. **23-28:** In the second place, and far more importantly, he now realized that the righteous man has something the wicked man could never enjoy, however prosperous he might become: a sense of the nearness of God (compare Ps. 63; also 27.4).

thou dost put an end to those who
are false to thee.

- ²⁸ But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the Lord GOD my
refuge,
that I may tell of all thy works.

A Maskil of Asaph.

74 O God, why dost thou cast us off
for ever?

Why does thy anger smoke against
the sheep of thy pasture?

- ² Remember thy congregation, which
thou hast gotten of old,
which thou hast redeemed to be
the tribe of thy heritage!
Remember Mount Zion, where
thou hast dwelt.

- ³ Direct thy steps to the perpetual
ruins;
the enemy has destroyed
everything in the sanctuary!

- ⁴ Thy foes have roared in the midst of
thy holy place;
they set up their own signs for
signs.

- ⁵ At the upper entrance they hacked
the wooden trellis with axes.^z

- ⁶ And then all its carved wood
they broke down with hatchets
and hammers.

- ⁷ They set thy sanctuary on fire;
to the ground they desecrated the
dwelling place of thy name.

- ⁸ They said to themselves, "We will
utterly subdue them";
they burned all the meeting places
of God in the land.

- ⁹ We do not see our signs;
there is no longer any prophet,
and there is none among us who
knows how long.

- ¹⁰ How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?
Is the enemy to revile thy name
for ever?

- ¹¹ Why dost thou hold back thy hand,
why dost thou keep thy right hand
in^a thy bosom?

- ¹² Yet God my King is from of old,
working salvation in the midst of
the earth.

- ¹³ Thou didst divide the sea by thy
might;
thou didst break the heads of the
dragons on the waters.

- ¹⁴ Thou didst crush the heads of
Leviathan,
thou didst give him as food^b for
the creatures of the wilderness.

- ¹⁵ Thou didst cleave open springs and
brooks;
thou didst dry up ever-flowing
streams.

- ¹⁶ Thine is the day, thine also the night;
thou hast established the
luminaries and the sun.

- ¹⁷ Thou hast fixed all the bounds of
the earth;
thou hast made summer and
winter.

- ¹⁸ Remember this, O LORD,
how the enemy scoffs,
and an impious people reviles thy
name.

^z Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb uncertain

^a Cn: Heb *consume thy right hand from*

^b Heb *food for the people*

Ps. 74: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a group lament; compare Ps. 44). **1-3:** Cry for help. **4-11:** The foe has devastated and burned the temple. If it were not for the statement in v. 9 that there is no longer any prophet, it would be natural to take the situation as being that of the conquest by the Babylonians in 587 B.C., but at that time, as evidenced by the activity of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the prophetic movement was at its height. Consequently the situation must be some otherwise unknown event of the post-exilic period (compare Is.64.11). Some have connected it with the Maccabean age. **4:** *Signs*, perhaps military standards. **12-17:** A hymn-like interlude, celebrating God as the creator. The allusion in vv. 13-15 is to one of the popular accounts of creation in which God was said to have subdued the monster of chaos (Leviathan or Rahab), a personification of the restless waters of the sea, before beginning his constructive activity (compare 89.10; Job 3.8 n.; 26.12-13; Is.27.1; 51.9). **18-23:** Prayer for deliverance. **19:** *Thy dove*, Israel.

¹⁹ Do not deliver the soul of thy dove
to the wild beasts;
do not forget the life of thy poor
for ever.

²⁰ Have regard for thy^c covenant;
for the dark places of the land
are full of the habitations of
violence.

²¹ Let not the downtrodden be put to
shame;
let the poor and needy praise thy
name.

²² Arise, O God, plead thy cause;
remember how the impious scoff
at thee all the day!

²³ Do not forget the clamor of thy foes,
the uproar of thy adversaries
which goes up continually!

To the choirmaster: according
to Do Not Destroy. A Psalm
of Asaph. A Song.

75 We give thanks to thee, O God;
we give thanks;
we call on thy name and recount^d
thy wondrous deeds.

² At the set time which I appoint
I will judge with equity.

³ When the earth totters, and all its
inhabitants,
it is I who keep steady its pillars.

Selah

⁴ I say to the boastful, "Do not boast,"
and to the wicked, "Do not lift up
your horn;

⁵ do not lift up your horn on high,
or speak with insolent neck."

⁶ For not from the east or from the
west
and not from the wilderness comes
lifting up;

⁷ but it is God who executes
judgment,
putting down one and lifting up
another.

⁸ For in the hand of the LORD there is
a cup,
with foaming wine, well mixed;
and he will pour a draught from it,
and all the wicked of the earth
shall drain it down to the dregs.

⁹ But I will rejoice^e for ever,
I will sing praises to the God of
Jacob.

¹⁰ All the horns of the wicked he^f will
cut off,
but the horns of the righteous
shall be exalted.

To the choirmaster: with stringed
instruments. A Psalm of Asaph.
A Song.

76 In Judah God is known,
his name is great in Israel.

² His abode has been established in
Salem,
his dwelling place in Zion.

³ There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shield, the sword, and the
weapons of war. *Selah*

⁴ Glorious art thou, more majestic
than the everlasting mountains.^g

^c Gk Syr: Heb the
^d Syr Compare Gk: Heb and near is thy name. They
recount
^e Gk: Heb declare ^f Heb I
^g Gk: Heb the mountains of prey

Ps. 75: National thanksgiving for God's mighty acts. 1: The verse shows that the basic theme is Israel's corporate (*we*) thankfulness, perhaps for a victory in battle. 2-5: A divine oracle prophesying judgment for the wicked, probably spoken by a priest or temple prophet. 3: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 4-5: *Horn*, symbol of strength and power. 6-8: A warning to all that the God of Israel controls the destinies of nations. 8: *Cup*, see Is.51.22-23; Jer.25.15; Lk.22.42 n. 9-10: An individual, perhaps the king (see 60.9 n.) brings the thanksgiving liturgy to a conclusion in an act of praise and faith.

Ps. 76: A song of Zion celebrating God's ultimate victory over the nations (compare Ps. 46). 1-3: Announcement of God's victory. 2: *Salem*, a poetical name for Jerusalem (compare Gen.14.18). 3: Although the verb is past, the reference is almost certainly to the great eschatological conflict of the latter days (see 48.4-8 n.; 46.6,9). *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 4-9: Hymn to the

- ⁵ The stouthearted were stripped of
their spoil;
they sank into sleep;
all the men of war
were unable to use their hands.
⁶ At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both rider and horse lay stunned.
⁷ But thou, terrible art thou!
Who can stand before thee
when once thy anger is roused?
⁸ From the heavens thou didst utter
judgment;
the earth feared and was still,
⁹ when God arose to establish
judgment
to save all the oppressed of the
earth. *Selah*
¹⁰ Surely the wrath of men shall praise
thee;
the residue of wrath thou wilt gird
upon thee.
¹¹ Make your vows to the LORD your
God, and perform them;
let all around him bring gifts
to him who is to be feared,
¹² who cuts off the spirit of princes,
who is terrible to the kings of the
earth.

To the choirmaster: according to
Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

- 77** I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, that he may
hear me.
² In the day of my trouble I seek the
Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched
out without wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.
³ I think of God, and I moan;
I meditate, and my spirit
faints. *Selah*

- ⁴ Thou dost hold my eyelids from
closing;
I am so troubled that I cannot
speak.
⁵ I consider the days of old,
I remember the years long ago.
⁶ I commune^h with my heart in the
night;
I meditate and search my spirit:ⁱ
⁷ "Will the Lord spurn for ever,
and never again be favorable?
⁸ Has his steadfast love for ever
ceased?
Are his promises at an end for all
time?
⁹ Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his
compassion?" *Selah*
¹⁰ And I say, "It is my grief
that the right hand of the Most
High has changed."
¹¹ I will call to mind the deeds of the
LORD;
yea, I will remember thy wonders
of old.
¹² I will meditate on all thy work,
and muse on thy mighty deeds.
¹³ Thy way, O God, is holy.
What god is great like our God?
¹⁴ Thou art the God who workest
wonders,
who hast manifested thy might
among the peoples.
¹⁵ Thou didst with thy arm redeem thy
people,
the sons of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*
¹⁶ When the waters saw thee, O God,
when the waters saw thee, they
were afraid,
yea, the deep trembled.
¹⁷ The clouds poured out water;

Selah

^h Gk Syr: Heb *my music*
ⁱ Syr Jerome: Heb *my spirit searches*

victorious God of Israel. **10:** God turns even men's evil intentions to his own good purposes. **11-12:** The congregation is exhorted to join in worshiping him.

Ps. 77: Prayer for deliverance from personal trouble (a lament). **1-6:** The psalmist's miserable situation. He does not specify the nature of his difficulty. **3:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **7-10:** His agony is so intense that he is tempted to question God's justice and love. **11-15:** To encourage himself, he recalls God's mighty works in the past. **16-20:** He quotes a fragment of an ancient hymn praising God for his work in creation (vv. 16-19) and in the history of Israel (v. 20).

the skies gave forth thunder;
thy arrows flashed on every side.
¹⁸ The crash of thy thunder was in the
whirlwind;
thy lightnings lighted up the world;
the earth trembled and shook.
¹⁹ Thy way was through the sea,
thy path through the great waters;
yet thy footprints were unseen.
²⁰ Thou didst lead thy people like a
flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

A Maskil of Asaph.

78 Give ear, O my people, to my
teaching;
incline your ears to the words of
my mouth!
² I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings from of
old,
³ things that we have heard and
known,
that our fathers have told us.
⁴ We will not hide them from their
children,
but tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the LORD, and
his might,
and the wonders which he has
wrought.
⁵ He established a testimony in Jacob,
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children;
⁶ that the next generation might know
them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their
children,

⁷ so that they should set their
hope in God,
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments;
⁸ and that they should not be like
their fathers,
a stubborn and rebellious
generation,
a generation whose heart was not
steadfast,
whose spirit was not faithful to
God.
⁹ The E'phraimites, armed with/ the
bow,
turned back on the day of battle.
¹⁰ They did not keep God's covenant,
but refused to walk according to
his law.
¹¹ They forgot what he had done,
and the miracles that he had
shown them.
¹² In the sight of their fathers he
wrought marvels
in the land of Egypt, in the fields
of Zo'an.
¹³ He divided the sea and let them pass
through it,
and made the waters stand like a
heap.
¹⁴ In the daytime he led them with a
cloud,
and all the night with a fiery light.
¹⁵ He cleft rocks in the wilderness,
and gave them drink abundantly
as from the deep.
¹⁶ He made streams come out of the
rock,
and caused waters to flow down
like rivers.
¹⁷ Yet they sinned still more against
him,

j Heb armed with shooting

Ps. 78: The story of God's great deeds and his people's faithlessness. One of a group of psalms (105; 106; 135; 136), composed for use at the major festivals, which simply recite the history of God's dealings with Israel. This psalm emphasizes the disobedience and ingratitude of the people, especially noting the defection of the Ephraimites (vv. 9-11) which led God to reject them in favor of Judah (vv. 67-69). **1-4:** The poet addresses the congregation in the style of the wisdom writers (compare 49.1-4). **2:** Quoted in Mt.13.35. **5-8:** The giving of the law. **6:** Dt.6.7. **9-11:** It is uncertain what incident is referred to. **12-53:** God's miraculous care for his people during the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings, a review of events in Exodus and Numbers, vv. 17-20 and 32-41 being interludes which describe the characteristic faithlessness of Israel. **12:** *Zoan*, a royal Egyptian store city, is identical with the Raamses of Ex.1.11. **15-16:** Ex.17.6;

- rebelling against the Most High in the desert.
- 18 They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved.
- 19 They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness?"
- 20 He smote the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread, or provide meat for his people?"
- 21 Therefore, when the LORD heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob, his anger mounted against Israel; 22 because they had no faith in God, and did not trust his saving power.
- 23 Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; 24 and he rained down upon them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven.
- 25 Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance.
- 26 He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind;
- 27 he rained flesh upon them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas;
- 28 he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their habitations.
- 29 And they ate and were well filled, for he gave them what they craved.
- 30 But before they had sated their craving, while the food was still in their mouths, 31 the anger of God rose against them and he slew the strongest of them, and laid low the picked men of Israel.
- 32 In spite of all this they still sinned; . despite his wonders they did not believe.
- 33 So he made their days vanish like a breath, and their years in terror.
- 34 When he slew them, they sought for him; they repented and sought God earnestly.
- 35 They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer.
- 36 But they flattered him with their mouths; they lied to him with their tongues.
- 37 Their heart was not steadfast toward him; they were not true to his covenant.
- 38 Yet he, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often, and did not stir up all his wrath.
- 39 He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again.
- 40 How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert!
- 41 They tested him again and again, and provoked the Holy One of Israel.
- 42 They did not keep in mind his power, or the day when he redeemed them from the foe;
- 43 when he wrought his signs in Egypt, and his miracles in the fields of Zo'an.
- 44 He turned their rivers to blood, so that they could not drink of their streams.
- 45 He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them, and frogs, which destroyed them.
- 46 He gave their crops to the caterpillar,

Num.20.10-13. 21-31: Ex. ch. 16; Num. ch. 11. 24: Quoted in Jn.6.31. 25: The manna is fancifully interpreted as *the bread of the angels*. 44-51: The plagues, Ex. chs. 7-12. 51: *Ham*, a

- and the fruit of their labor to the locust.
- ⁴⁷ He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamores with frost.
- ⁴⁸ He gave over their cattle to the hail, and their flocks to thunderbolts.
- ⁴⁹ He let loose on them his fierce anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels.
- ⁵⁰ He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death, but gave their lives over to the plague.
- ⁵¹ He smote all the first-born in Egypt, the first issue of their strength in the tents of Ham.
- ⁵² Then he led forth his people like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
- ⁵³ He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
- ⁵⁴ And he brought them to his holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won.
- ⁵⁵ He drove out nations before them; he apportioned them for a possession and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.
- ⁵⁶ Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God, and did not observe his testimonies,
- ⁵⁷ but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers; they twisted like a deceitful bow.
- ⁵⁸ For they provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their graven images.
- ⁵⁹ When God heard, he was full of wrath, and he utterly rejected Israel.
- ⁶⁰ He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among men,
- ⁶¹ and delivered his power to captivity, his glory to the hand of the foe.
- ⁶² He gave his people over to the sword, and vented his wrath on his heritage.
- ⁶³ Fire devoured their young men, and their maidens had no marriage song.
- ⁶⁴ Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation.
- ⁶⁵ Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, like a strong man shouting because of wine.
- ⁶⁶ And he put his adversaries to rout; he put them to everlasting shame.
- ⁶⁷ He rejected the tent of Joseph, he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;
- ⁶⁸ but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves.
- ⁶⁹ He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded for ever.
- ⁷⁰ He chose David his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds;
- ⁷¹ from tending the ewes that had young he brought him to be the shepherd of Jacob his people, of Israel his inheritance.
- ⁷² With upright heart he tended them, and guided them with skilful hand.

poetic synonym for Egypt (Gen.10.6). **54-64:** God's care for his people during the conquest and in the days of the Judges; their continued faithlessness. **55:** *Nations*, Dt.7.1. **60-64:** The destruction of the temple at *Shiloh* is mentioned elsewhere only in Jer.7.12-14 and 26.6; the period was that of the events related in 1 Sam.4.1-7.2. **65-66:** Victories over the Philistines in the time of Saul and David. **67-72:** The building of the temple and the establishment of the Davidic dynasty. The passage reflects the tension between North and South which led to the division of the nation into Judah and Israel (Ephraim) and the eventual schism between Jews and Samaritans.

A Psalm of Asaph.

- 79 O God, the heathen have come into thy inheritance;
they have defiled thy holy temple;
they have laid Jerusalem in ruins.
- 2 They have given the bodies of thy servants
to the birds of the air for food,
the flesh of thy saints to the beasts
of the earth.
- 3 They have poured out their blood
like water
round about Jerusalem,
and there was none to bury them.
- 4 We have become a taunt to our neighbors,
mocked and derided by those
round about us.
- 5 How long, O LORD? Wilt thou be angry for ever?
Will thy jealous wrath burn like fire?
- 6 Pour out thy anger on the nations
that do not know thee,
and on the kingdoms
that do not call on thy name!
- 7 For they have devoured Jacob,
and laid waste his habitation.
- 8 Do not remember against us the iniquities of our forefathers;
let thy compassion come speedily to meet us,
for we are brought very low.
- 9 Help us, O God of our salvation,
for the glory of thy name;
deliver us, and forgive our sins,
for thy name's sake!
- 10 Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
Let the avenging of the outpoured
blood of thy servants
be known among the nations
before our eyes!

Lament over the destruction of Jerusalem

- 11 Let the groans of the prisoners come before thee;
according to thy great power
preserve those doomed to die!
- 12 Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors
the taunts with which they have taunted thee, O Lord!
- 13 Then we thy people, the flock of thy pasture,
will give thanks to thee for ever;
from generation to generation we
will recount thy praise.

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies.
A Testimony of Asaph. A Psalm.

- 80 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
thou who leadest Joseph like a flock!
Thou who art enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth
- 2 before E'phraim and Benjamin
and Manas'seh!
Stir up thy might,
and come to save us!
- 3 Restore us, O God;
let thy face shine, that we may be saved!
- 4 O LORD God of hosts,
how long wilt thou be angry with thy people's prayers?
- 5 Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
- 6 Thou dost make us the scorn^k of our neighbors;
and our enemies laugh among themselves.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts;

^k Syr: Heb *strife*

Ps. 79: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a group lament). The occasion is probably the same as that of Ps. 74 (see 74.4–11 n.). **1–4:** The people's situation: they are defeated and persecuted. **2:** *Saints*, see 30.4 n. **5–12:** Prayer for deliverance and vengeance. **13:** The vow (see 7.17 n.).

Ps. 80: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a group lament). **1–3:** Cry for help. The tribes mentioned show that the psalm is a product of the northern kingdom, Israel (compare 78.67–68). **1:** *Cherubim*, see 1 Sam.4.4. **3:** A refrain (see vv. 7,19). **8–13:** Israel as a vine,

let thy face shine, that we may be saved!

- ⁸ Thou didst bring a vine out of Egypt;
thou didst drive out the nations and plant it.
- ⁹ Thou didst clear the ground for it;
it took deep root and filled the land.
- ¹⁰ The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches;
- ¹¹ it sent out its branches to the sea,
and its shoots to the River.
- ¹² Why then hast thou broken down its walls,
so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?
- ¹³ The boar from the forest ravages it,
and all that move in the field feed on it.
- ¹⁴ Turn again, O God of hosts!
Look down from heaven, and see;
have regard for this vine,
¹⁵ the stock which thy right hand planted.¹
- ¹⁶ They have burned it with fire, they have cut it down;
may they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance!
- ¹⁷ But let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,
the son of man whom thou hast made strong for thyself!
- ¹⁸ Then we will never turn back from thee;
give us life, and we will call on thy name!
- ¹⁹ Restore us, O LORD God of hosts!
let thy face shine, that we may be saved!

To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph.

- 81** Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob!
- ² Raise a song, sound the timbrel,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
- ³ Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our feast day.
- ⁴ For it is a statute for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.
- ⁵ He made it a decree in Joseph,
when he went out over^m the land of Egypt.
- I hear a voice I had not known:
⁶ "I relieved yourⁿ shoulder of the burden;
yourⁿ hands were freed from the basket.
- ⁷ In distress you called, and I delivered you;
I answered you in the secret place of thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Mer'ibah. *Selah*
- ⁸ Hear, O my people, while I admonish you!
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!
- ⁹ There shall be no strange god among you;
you shall not bow down to a foreign god.
- ¹⁰ I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.
- ¹¹ "But my people did not listen to my voice;

¹ Heb planted and upon the son whom thou hast reared for thyself
^m Or against ⁿ Heb his

once carefully tended, but now forsaken (compare Is.5.1-7). **8:** *Nations*, see 78.55 n. **11:** *The River*, the Euphrates (1 Kg.4.21). **14-19:** Prayer for deliverance. **17:** *Man and son of man* are personifications of Israel.

Ps. 81: Liturgy for a festival. 1-5a: Hymn-like summons to worship. **3:** *Feast day*, probably feast of booths (Dt.16.13-15). **5b-16:** A priest or temple prophet delivers a divine oracle in which God reminds his people of what he has done for them in the past (vv.6-7); his demand for their loyalty (vv. 8-10) and their disobedience to it (vv. 11-12); their future prosperity depends on their willingness now to change their ways (vv. 13-16; compare 95.7b-11). **7:** *The secret place of thunder*, Sinai. *Meribah*, Ex.17.7; Num.20.13. *Selah*, see 3.2 n.

- Israel would have none of me.
¹² So I gave them over to their
 stubborn hearts,
 to follow their own counsels.
¹³ O that my people would listen to me,
 that Israel would walk in my
 ways!
¹⁴ I would soon subdue their enemies,
 and turn my hand against their
 foes.
¹⁵ Those who hate the LORD would
 cringe toward him,
 and their fate would last for ever.
¹⁶ I would feed you^o with the finest of
 the wheat,
 and with honey from the rock I
 would satisfy you."

A Psalm of Asaph.

- 82** God has taken his place in the
 divine council;
 in the midst of the gods he holds
 judgment:
² "How long will you judge unjustly
 and show partiality to the wicked?
Selah
³ Give justice to the weak and the
 fatherless;
 maintain the right of the afflicted
 and the destitute.
⁴ Rescue the weak and the needy;
 deliver them from the hand of the
 wicked."
⁵ They have neither knowledge nor
 understanding,
 they walk about in darkness;
 all the foundations of the earth are
 shaken.

- ⁶ I say, "You are gods,

sons of the Most High, all of you;
⁷ nevertheless, you shall die like men,
 and fall like any prince."^p

- ⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth;
 for to thee belong all the nations!

A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.

- 83** O God, do not keep silence;
 do not hold thy peace or be
 still, O God!
² For lo, thy enemies are in tumult;
 those who hate thee have raised
 their heads.
³ They lay crafty plans against thy
 people;
 they consult together against thy
 protected ones.
⁴ They say, "Come, let us wipe them
 out as a nation;
 let the name of Israel be
 remembered no more!"
⁵ Yea, they conspire with one accord;
 against thee they make a
 covenant—
⁶ the tents of Edom and the
 Ish'maelites,
 Moab and the Hagrites,
⁷ Gebal and Ammon and Am'alek,
 Philistia with the inhabitants of
 Tyre;
⁸ Assyria also has joined them;
 they are the strong arm of the
 children of Lot. *Selah*
⁹ Do to them as thou didst to Mid'ian,
 as to Sis'era and Jabin at the
 river Kishon,
¹⁰ who were destroyed at En-dor,

^o Cn Compare verse 16b: Heb he would feed him
^p Or fall as one man, O princes

Ps. 82: Liturgy of the LORD's judgment on pagan gods. 1: Making use of a conception, common to the ancient Near East, that the world is ruled by a council of gods (89.5-7), the poet (presumably a priest or temple prophet) sees, in a vision, the God of Israel standing up in the midst of the council and pronouncing judgment upon all the other members. 2-7: Because they govern the earth unjustly, they shall all perish like mere human beings (Ezek.28.9). 2: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 6: Quoted in Jn.10.34. 8: A prayer that the poet's vision may be realized.

Ps. 83: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a lament). 1: Cry for help. 2-8: Israel's perilous situation, attacked by a powerful group of foreign allies. 6-7: These are Israel's near neighbors. 8: *Children* (sons) of Lot, Moab and Edom (Gen.19.36-38; Dt.2.9). *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 9-18: Prayer for victory. 9-11: Gideon's decisive victory over Midian is recorded in Jg. chs.

who became dung for the ground.
¹¹ Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
 all their princes like Zebah and Zalmun'na,
¹² who said, "Let us take possession for ourselves
 of the pastures of God."

¹³ O my God, make them like
 whirling dust,^q
 like chaff before the wind.
¹⁴ As fire consumes the forest,
 as the flame sets the mountains
 ablaze,
¹⁵ so do thou pursue them with thy
 tempest
 and terrify them with thy
 hurricane!
¹⁶ Fill their faces with shame,
 that they may seek thy name, O
 LORD.
¹⁷ Let them be put to shame and
 dismayed for ever;
 let them perish in disgrace.
¹⁸ Let them know that thou alone,
 whose name is the LORD,
 art the Most High over all the
 earth.

To the choirmaster: according to The
 Gittith. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

84 How lovely is thy dwelling
 place,
 O LORD of hosts!
² My soul longs, yea, faints
 for the courts of the LORD;
 my heart and flesh sing for joy
 to the living God.

³ Even the sparrow finds a home,
 and the swallow a nest for herself,

where she may lay her young,
 at thy altars, O LORD of hosts,
 my King and my God.
⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in thy
 house,
 ever singing thy praise! *Selah*
⁵ Blessed are the men whose strength
 is in thee,
 in whose heart are the highways
 to Zion.^r
⁶ As they go through the valley of
 Baca
 they make it a place of
 springs;
 the early rain also covers it with
 pools.
⁷ They go from strength to strength;
 the God of gods will be seen in
 Zion.
⁸ O LORD God of hosts, hear my
 prayer;
 give ear, O God of Jacob! *Selah*
⁹ Behold our shield, O God;
 look upon the face of thine
 anointed!

¹⁰ For a day in thy courts is better
 than a thousand elsewhere.
 I would rather be a doorkeeper in
 the house of my God
 than dwell in the tents of
 wickedness.
¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and
 shield;
 he bestows favor and honor.
 No good thing does the LORD
 withhold
 from those who walk uprightly.
¹² O LORD of hosts,
 blessed is the man who trusts in
 thee!

^q Or a tumbleweed
^r Heb lacks to Zion

6-8; the defeat of *Sisera and Jabin* by Deborah and Barak in Jg. chs. 4-5. *Oreb and Zeeb*, Jg.7.25. *Zebah and Zalmunna*, Jg.8.21.

Ps. 84: Song praising Zion as the longed-for goal of the pilgrim. 1-2: Praise for the temple. 3-4: Envy of the birds and servitors who live there. 4: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 5-7: The joys of the pilgrimage. 6: *Baca*, some unknown, desolate place through which the pilgrims must go. 8-9: Prayer for the king (see 61.6-7 n.). 9: *Anointed*, see 2.2 n. 10-12: The superiority of life in the temple to life anywhere else.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the
Sons of Korah.

¹³ Righteousness will go before him,
and make his footsteps a way.

85 LORD, thou wast favorable to
thy land;
thou didst restore the fortunes of
Jacob.
² Thou didst forgive the iniquity of
thy people;
thou didst pardon all their sin.
Selah
³ Thou didst withdraw all thy wrath;
thou didst turn from thy hot anger.

A Prayer of David.

86 Incline thy ear, O LORD, and
answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
² Preserve my life, for I am godly;
save thy servant who trusts in
thee.
Thou art my God; ³ be gracious
to me, O Lord,
for to thee do I cry all the day.
⁴ Gladden the soul of thy servant,
for to thee, O Lord, do I lift up my
soul.
⁵ For thou, O Lord, art good and
forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all
who call on thee.
⁶ Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
hearken to my cry of supplication.
⁷ In the day of my trouble I call on
thee,
for thou dost answer me.

⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will
speak,
for he will speak peace to his
people,
to his saints, to those who turn to
him in their hearts.^s
⁹ Surely his salvation is at hand for
those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.
¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will
meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss
each other.
¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the
ground,
and righteousness will look down
from the sky.
¹² Yea, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

⁸ There is none like thee among the
gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like thine.
⁹ All the nations thou hast made shall
come
and bow down before thee, O
Lord,
and shall glorify thy name.
¹⁰ For thou art great and doest
wondrous things,
thou alone art God.
¹¹ Teach me thy way, O LORD,
that I may walk in thy truth;
unite my heart to fear thy name.
¹² I give thanks to thee, O Lord my
God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify thy name for
ever.

^s Gk: Heb but let them not turn back to folly

Ps. 85: Prayer for deliverance from national adversity (a group lament). **1-3:** God's favor toward his people in time past. **4-7:** Prayer that God's favor may be manifested again in their present difficulties (perhaps poor crops; compare v. 12). **8-13:** A priest or temple prophet delivers an oracle of assurance. **8:** *Saints*, see 30.4 n.

Ps. 86: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-7:** Cry for help. **8-10:** God is praised for his power. **11:** Prayer for guidance. **12-13:** Thanksgiving, spoken in confident

¹³ For great is thy steadfast love
toward me;
thou hast delivered my soul from
the depths of Sheol.

¹⁴ O God, insolent men have risen up
against me;
a band of ruthless men seek my
life,
and they do not set thee before
them.

¹⁵ But thou, O Lord, art a God
merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in
steadfast love and faithfulness.

¹⁶ Turn to me and take pity on me;
give thy strength to thy servant,
and save the son of thy handmaid.

¹⁷ Show me a sign of thy favor,
that those who hate me may see
and be put to shame
because thou, LORD, hast helped
me and comforted me.

A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. A Song.

87 On the holy mount stands the
city he founded;
² the LORD loves the gates of Zion
more than all the dwelling places
of Jacob.

³ Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God. *Selah*

⁴ Among those who know me I
mention Rahab and Babylon;
behold, Philistia and Tyre, with
Ethiopia—
"This one was born there," they
say.

⁵ And of Zion it shall be said,
"This one and that one were born
in her";
for the Most High himself will
establish her.

⁶ The LORD records as he registers the
peoples,
"This one was born there." *Selah*

⁷ Singers and dancers alike say,
"All my springs are in you."

A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah
To the choirmaster: according to
Mahalath Leannoth. A Maskil of
Heman the Ezrahite.

88 O LORD, my God, I call for
help' by day;

I cry out in the night before thee.

² Let my prayer come before thee,
incline thy ear to my cry!

³ For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.

⁴ I am reckoned among those who go
down to the Pit;

I am a man who has no strength,
⁵ like one forsaken among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom thou dost

remember no more,
for they are cut off from thy hand.

⁶ Thou hast put me in the depths of
the Pit,
in the regions dark and deep.

⁷ Thy wrath lies heavy upon me,
and thou dost overwhelm me
with all thy waves. *Selah*

t Cn: Heb O LORD, God of my salvation

anticipation of deliverance. **13:** *Sheol*, the abode of the dead. The psalmist is sure God will not permit him to die. **14:** His prayer is for preservation from ruthless enemies. **15-17:** He returns to the mood of supplication. **16:** *Son of thy handmaid*, synonymous with *thy servant*.

Ps. 87: Song praising Zion as the mother of believers everywhere. The text of this psalm is damaged and disarranged. **1-3:** The glory of Zion (Jerusalem). **3:** This verse provided the theme for Augustine's *City of God* and was the inspiration of a popular hymn. *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **4:** God's people, the citizens of Zion, are found in every country. *Rahab*, a poetical name for Egypt. **5:** The roll of Zion's citizens is a long and proud one. **6:** As God keeps the census records of the world, he notes with special pleasure the citizens of Zion. **7:** This verse seems to be only a fragment. *Springs*, sources of welfare.

Ps. 88: Desperate prayer for healing in sickness (a lament). **1-2:** Cry for help. **3-9:** The psalmist's situation, probably one of lifelong illness (compare v. 15). **3-4:** *Sheol . . . the Pit*, see 6.5 n. **5-6:** A classic description of Sheol (compare vv. 10-12; Job 10.21-22; Is.38.18-19). **7:** *Selah*,

- ⁸ Thou hast caused my companions
to shun me;
thou hast made me a thing of
horror to them.
I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
⁹ my eye grows dim through sorrow.
Every day I call upon thee, O LORD;
I spread out my hands to thee.
¹⁰ Dost thou work wonders for the
dead?
Do the shades rise up to praise
thee? *Selah*
¹¹ Is thy steadfast love declared in the
grave,
or thy faithfulness in Abaddon?
¹² Are thy wonders known in the
darkness,
or thy saving help in the land of
forgetfulness?
¹³ But I, O LORD, cry to thee;
in the morning my prayer comes
before thee.
¹⁴ O LORD, why dost thou cast me off?
Why dost thou hide thy face from
me?
¹⁵ Afflicted and close to death from my
youth up,
I suffer thy terrors; I am helpless.^u
¹⁶ Thy wrath has swept over me;
thy dread assaults destroy me.
¹⁷ They surround me like a flood all
day long;
they close in upon me together.
¹⁸ Thou hast caused lover and friend
to shun me;
my companions are in darkness.

A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

- 89** I will sing of thy steadfast love,
O LORD,^v for ever;
with my mouth I will proclaim
thy faithfulness to all
generations.
² For thy steadfast love was
established for ever,

- thy faithfulness is firm as the
heavens.
³ Thou hast said, "I have made a
covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant:
⁴ 'I will establish your descendants for
ever,
and build your throne for all
generations.' " *Selah*
⁵ Let the heavens praise thy wonders,
O LORD,
thy faithfulness in the assembly of
the holy ones!
⁶ For who in the skies can be
compared to the LORD?
Who among the heavenly
beings^w is like the LORD,
⁷ a God feared in the council of the
holy ones,
great and terrible^x above all that
are round about him?
⁸ O LORD God of hosts,
who is mighty as thou art, O
LORD,
with thy faithfulness round about
thee?
⁹ Thou dost rule the raging of the sea;
when its waves rise, thou stillest
them.
¹⁰ Thou didst crush Rahab like a car-
cass,
thou didst scatter thy enemies with
thy mighty arm.
¹¹ The heavens are thine, the earth also
is thine;
the world and all that is in it, thou
hast founded them.
¹² The north and the south, thou hast
created them;
Tabor and Hermon joyously
praise thy name.
¹³ Thou hast a mighty arm;
strong is thy hand, high thy right
hand.

^u The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^v Gk: Heb *the steadfast love of the LORD*

^w Or *sons of gods*

^x Gk Syr: Heb *greatly terrible*

see 3.2 n. 10-18: Prayer for deliverance, notable for the absence of even a spark of hopefulness.
11: *Abaddon*, see Job 26.6 n.

Ps. 89: A king prays for deliverance from his enemies. 1-18: Hymn extolling God's power and faithfulness. 3-4: His covenant with David recalled (compare vv. 19-37; 2 Sam.7.16). 4: *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 5-7: See 82.1 n. 10: *Rahab*, see 74.12-17 n. 12: *Tabor*, a mountain in the north of

- ¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne;
steadfast love and faithfulness go before thee.
- ¹⁵ Blessed are the people who know the festal shout,
who walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance,
- ¹⁶ who exult in thy name all the day, and extol¹ thy righteousness.
- ¹⁷ For thou art the glory of their strength;
by thy favor our horn is exalted.
- ¹⁸ For our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.
- ¹⁹ Of old thou didst speak in a vision to thy faithful one, and say:
"I have set the crown² upon one who is mighty,
I have exalted one chosen from the people.
- ²⁰ I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him;
²¹ so that my hand shall ever abide with him,
my arm also shall strengthen him.
- ²² The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him.
- ²³ I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.
- ²⁴ My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him,
and in my name shall his horn be exalted.
- ²⁵ I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.
- ²⁶ He shall cry to me, 'Thou art my Father,
my God, and the Rock of my salvation.'
- ²⁷ And I will make him the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth.
- ²⁸ My steadfast love I will keep for him for ever,
and my covenant will stand firm for him.
- ²⁹ I will establish his line for ever and his throne as the days of the heavens.
- ³⁰ If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my ordinances,
³¹ if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments,
³² then I will punish their transgression with the rod
and their iniquity with scourges;
³³ but I will not remove from him my steadfast love,
or be false to my faithfulness.
- ³⁴ I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips.
- ³⁵ Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;
I will not lie to David.
- ³⁶ His line shall endure for ever, his throne as long as the sun before me.
- ³⁷ Like the moon it shall be established for ever;
it shall stand firm while the skies endure."^a *Selah*
- ³⁸ But now thou hast cast off and rejected,
thou art full of wrath against thy anointed.
- ³⁹ Thou hast renounced the covenant with thy servant;
thou hast defiled his crown in the dust.
- ⁴⁰ Thou hast breached all his walls;
thou hast laid his strongholds in ruins.
- ⁴¹ All that pass by despoil him;
he has become the scorn of his neighbors.
- ⁴² Thou hast exalted the right hand of his foes;

^y Cn: Heb are exalted in ^z Cn: Heb help
^a Cn: Heb the witness in the skies is sure

Palestine. *Hermon*, the highest mountain of Syria. **17:** *Horn*, see 75.4-5 n. **18:** *Shield*, the king (see 47.9 n.). **19-37:** The terms of the unalterable covenant which God had once established with the Davidic dynasty. **19:** *Faithful one*, David (compare vv. 3-4); alternatively, Nathan (see 2 Sam. 7.4). **27:** *The first-born*, compare 2.7. **38-45:** The king has been defeated in battle (v. 43), and it seems that God has forsaken the covenant. **38:** *Anointed* (see v. 20; 2.2. n.).

BOOK IV

thou hast made all his enemies
rejoice.

⁴³ Yea, thou hast turned back the edge
of his sword,
and thou hast not made him stand
in battle.

⁴⁴ Thou hast removed the scepter from
his hand,^b
and cast his throne to the
ground.

⁴⁵ Thou hast cut short the days of his
youth;
thou hast covered him with shame.
Selah

⁴⁶ How long, O LORD? Wilt thou hide
thyself for ever?
How long will thy wrath burn like
fire?

⁴⁷ Remember, O Lord,^c what the
measure of life is,
for what vanity thou hast created
all the sons of men!

⁴⁸ What man can live and never see
death?
Who can deliver his soul from the
power of Sheol? *Selah*

⁴⁹ Lord, where is thy steadfast love of
old,
which by thy faithfulness thou
didst swear to David?

⁵⁰ Remember, O Lord, how thy
servant is scorned;
how I bear in my bosom the
insults^d of the peoples,

⁵¹ with which thy enemies taunt, O
LORD,
with which they mock the
footsteps of thy anointed.

⁵² Blessed be the LORD for ever!
Amen and Amen.

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

90 Lord, thou hast been our
dwelling place^e
in all generations.

² Before the mountains were brought
forth,
³ or ever thou hadst formed the
earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting
thou art God.

³ Thou turnest man back to the dust,
and sayest, "Turn back, O children
of men!"

⁴ For a thousand years in thy sight
are but as yesterday when it is
past,
or as a watch in the night.

⁵ Thou dost sweep men away; they are
like a dream,
like grass which is renewed in the
morning:

⁶ in the morning it flourishes and is
renewed;
in the evening it fades and
withers.

⁷ For we are consumed by thy anger;
by thy wrath we are overwhelmed.

⁸ Thou hast set our iniquities before
thee,
our secret sins in the light of thy
countenance.

⁹ For all our days pass away under thy
wrath,
our years come to an end^f like a
sigh.

¹⁰ The years of our life are threescore
and ten,

b Cn: Heb removed his cleanness *c* Cn: Heb I
d Cn: Heb all of many *e* Another reading is refuge
f Syr: Heb we bring our years to an end

46-51: Prayer that God will remember his promises and give victory to David's descendant.
48: *Sheol*, see 6.5 n.; 49.15. **52:** A doxology (no part of the psalm) marking the end of Book III
of the Psalter (see 41.13 n.).

Ps. 90: Prayer for deliverance from national adversity (a group lament). **1-6:** Hymn-like
introduction declaring God's eternity and man's transience (compare Is.40.6-8). **4:** *Watch*, see
63.6 n. **7-10:** Brevity and sorrow of human existence. **11-12:** Prayer that men may learn wisdom
from considering this. **13-17:** Prayer that Israel may be delivered from her difficulties.

or even by reason of strength
 fourscore;
 yet their span^g is but toil and
 trouble;
 they are soon gone, and we fly
 away.

11 Who considers the power of thy
 anger,
 and thy wrath according to the
 fear of thee?

12 So teach us to number our days
 that we may get a heart of
 wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD! How long?
 Have pity on thy servants!

14 Satisfy us in the morning with thy
 steadfast love,
 that we may rejoice and be glad
 all our days.

15 Make us glad as many days as thou
 hast afflicted us,
 and as many years as we have
 seen evil.

16 Let thy work be manifest to thy
 servants,
 and thy glorious power to their
 children.

17 Let the favor of the Lord our God
 be upon us,
 and establish thou the work of our
 hands upon us,
 yea, the work of our hands
 establish thou it.

9 He who dwells in the shelter of
 the Most High,
 who abides in the shadow of the
 Almighty,
 2 will say to the LORD, "My refuge and
 my fortress;
 my God, in whom I trust."
 3 For he will deliver you from the
 snare of the fowler
 and from the deadly pestilence;
 4 he will cover you with his pinions,

and under his wings you will find
 refuge;
 his faithfulness is a shield and
 buckler.

5 You will not fear the terror of the
 night,
 nor the arrow that flies by day,
 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in
 darkness,
 nor the destruction that wastes at
 noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,
 ten thousand at your right hand;
 but it will not come near you.

8 You will only look with your eyes
 and see the recompense of the
 wicked.

9 Because you have made the LORD
 your refuge,^h
 the Most High your habitation,
 10 no evil shall befall you,
 no scourge come near your tent.

11 For he will give his angels charge of
 you
 to guard you in all your ways.

12 On their hands they will bear you up,
 lest you dash your foot against
 a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the
 adder,
 the young lion and the serpent you
 will trample under foot.

14 Because he cleaves to me in love,
 I will deliver him;
 I will protect him, because he
 knows my name.

15 When he calls to me, I will answer
 him;
 I will be with him in trouble,
 I will rescue him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him,
 and show him my salvation.

^g Cn Compare Gk Syr Jerome Tg: Heb *pride*
^h Cn: Heb *Because thou, LORD, art my refuge; you have made*

Ps. 91: Meditation on God as the protector of the faithful (a wisdom psalm). 1–13: Those who trust in the LORD need have no fear of any peril (121.2–8). Some of the dangers mentioned are human foes; others are demonic forces. 11–12: Quoted in Mt.4.6; Lk.4.10–11. 14–16: A divine oracle of assurance, probably spoken by a priest or temple prophet.

A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath.

92 It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to thy name, O Most High;
2 to declare thy steadfast love in the morning,
and thy faithfulness by night,
3 to the music of the lute and the harp,
to the melody of the lyre.
4 For thou, O LORD, hast made me glad by thy work;
at the works of thy hands I sing for joy.

5 How great are thy works, O LORD!
Thy thoughts are very deep!
6 The dull man cannot know,
the stupid cannot understand this:
7 that, though the wicked sprout like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they are doomed to destruction for ever,
8 but thou, O LORD, art on high for ever.
9 For, lo, thy enemies, O LORD,
for, lo, thy enemies shall perish;
all evildoers shall be scattered.

10 But thou hast exalted my horn like that of the wild ox;
thou hast poured over meⁱ fresh oil.

11 My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies,
my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.

12 The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13 They are planted in the house of the LORD,
they flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They still bring forth fruit in old age,
they are ever full of sap and green,
15 to show that the LORD is upright;
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

93 The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty;
the LORD is robed, he is girded with strength.
Yea, the world is established; it shall never be moved;
2 thy throne is established from of old;
thou art from everlasting.
3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
the floods have lifted up their voice,
the floods lift up their roaring.
4 Mightier than the thunders of many waters,
mightier than the waves^j of the sea,
the LORD on high is mighty!

5 Thy decrees are very sure;
holiness befits thy house,
O LORD, for evermore.

ⁱ Syr: Heb uncertain
^j Cn: Heb mighty the waves

Ps. 92: Thanksgiving after deliverance from personal enemies. 1-3: Hymn-like introduction 2: *Morning . . . night*, compare the morning and evening sacrifices (Ex.29.38-42). 4: The occasion (described more explicitly in vv. 10-11) is a desire to give thanks for an answer to the psalmist's prayer for help. 5-9: The mystery and power of God. 10-11: The psalmist exults in his vindication. *Horn*, see 75.4-5 n. 12-15: The rewards of righteousness (1.1-3). 13: Compare 52.8.

Ps. 93: Hymn extolling God as king. This psalm begins a collection of hymns (Pss. 93; 95-99) dealing with the kingly rule of the God of Israel. They were apparently composed for use in connection with some feast, perhaps the feast of booths, when the theme of God's kingship (or "kingdom") was especially emphasized. Compare Ps. 47, which is closely related. 1-2: The theme is stated. 3-4: God's rule is based upon his control over the powers of chaos, symbolized by the waters of the sea (74.12-17; 104.7-9; Job 38.8-11). 5: God's decrees are sure and his temple is holy.

- 94 O LORD, thou God of
vengeance,
thou God of vengeance, shine
forth!
2 Rise up, O judge of the earth;
render to the proud their deserts!
3 O LORD, how long shall the wicked,
how long shall the wicked exult?
4 They pour out their arrogant words,
they boast, all the evildoers.
5 They crush thy people, O LORD,
and afflict thy heritage.
6 They slay the widow and the
sojourner,
and murder the fatherless;
7 and they say, "The LORD does not
see;
the God of Jacob does not
perceive."
8 Understand, O dullest of the people!
Fools, when will you be wise?
9 He who planted the ear, does he not
hear?
He who formed the eye, does he not
see?
10 He who chastens the nations, does
he not chastise?
He who teaches men knowledge,
11 the LORD, knows the thoughts of
man,
that they are but a breath.
12 Blessed is the man whom thou dost
chasten, O LORD,
and whom thou dost teach out of
thy law
13 to give him respite from days of
trouble,
until a pit is dug for the wicked.

- 14 For the LORD will not forsake his
people;
he will not abandon his heritage;
15 for justice will return to the
righteous,
and all the upright in heart will
follow it.
16 Who rises up for me against the
wicked?
Who stands up for me against
evildoers?
17 If the LORD had not been my help,
my soul would soon have dwelt
in the land of silence.
18 When I thought, "My foot slips,"
thy steadfast love, O LORD, held
me up.
19 When the cares of my heart are
many,
thy consolations cheer my soul.
20 Can wicked rulers be allied with
thee,
who frame mischief by statute?
21 They band together against the life
of the righteous,
and condemn the innocent to
death.
22 But the LORD has become my
stronghold,
and my God the rock of my
refuge.
23 He will bring back on them their
iniquity
and wipe them out for their
wickedness;
the LORD our God will wipe them
out.

95 O come, let us sing to the
LORD;

Ps. 94: A prayer for deliverance from evil men (a lament). Although this seems to be originally the prayer of an individual (note vv. 16–23), the enemies are described in such general and indefinite terms (vv. 4–7, 20–21) that it was easily adapted to congregational use. **1–3:** Cry for help. **4–7:** The psalmist's situation. He sees his own misfortunes as typical of the corruption of his age (compare 10.2–11; Ps. 14). **8–15:** In the style of the wisdom writers, he appeals to the congregation to understand the ways of the LORD. **16:** Prayer for deliverance in the form of a rhetorical question. **17–23:** An expression of confidence, perhaps in response to an oracle of assurance delivered after v. 16 (see 12.5 n.). **17:** *Land of silence*, Sheol (compare 115.17). **20–21:** The psalmist's enemies were persons in high official position in the state.

Ps. 95: A liturgy of God's kingship. This brief outline of a service opens with a hymn celebrating God's kingship (vv. 1–7a; see Ps. 93 n.) and closes with an oracle, delivered by a priest or temple prophet, warning the congregation against disobeying God's laws (vv. 7b–11; com-

- let us make a joyful noise to the
rock of our salvation!
- ² Let us come into his presence with
thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him
with songs of praise!
- ³ For the LORD is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
- ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the
earth;
the heights of the mountains are
his also.
- ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it;
for his hands formed the dry land.
- ⁶ O come, let us worship and bow
down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our
Maker!
- ⁷ For he is our God,
and we are the people of his
pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.
- O that today you would hearken to
his voice!
- ⁸ Harden not your hearts, as at
Mer'ibah,
as on the day at Massah in the
wilderness,
- ⁹ when your fathers tested me,
and put me to the proof, though
they had seen my work.
- ¹⁰ For forty years I loathed that
generation
and said, "They are a people who
err in heart,
and they do not regard my ways."
- ¹¹ Therefore I swore in my anger
that they should not enter my rest.
- 96** O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth!
- ² Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to
day.
- ³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all
the peoples!
- ⁴ For great is the LORD, and greatly
to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.
- ⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are
idols;
but the LORD made the heavens.
- ⁶ Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his
sanctuary.
- ⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of
the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and
strength!
- ⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due
his name;
bring an offering, and come into
his courts!
- ⁹ Worship the LORD in holy array;
tremble before him, all the
earth!
- ¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD
reigns!
Yea, the world is established, it
shall never be moved;
he will judge the peoples with
equity."
- ¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the
earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
- ¹² let the field exult, and everything
in it!
Then shall all the trees of the wood
sing for joy
- ¹³ before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.

pare 81.6-16). **1-2:** Summons to worship. **3-5:** God's rule based upon the fact that he created the world. **6-7a:** Renewed summons to worship. **7b-11:** Prophetic warning against disobedience. Quoted in Heb.3.7-11; 4.3-11. The declaration that worship without obedience is displeasing to God is a cardinal principle of Old Testament religion (Pss. 15; 24.3-6; see 40.6 n.). **8:** *Meribah* . . . *Massah*, Ex.17.1-7; Num.20.1-13; compare 106.32-33. **10-11:** Num.14.33. *My rest*, the Promised Land.

Pss. 96: Hymn celebrating God's kingship. **1-3:** Summons to worship. **4-6:** The LORD is the powerful creator; all other gods are only powerless images (115.3-8). **7-13:** Summons to all nations and to the physical universe to join in his praise. **9:** *Holy array* means ceremonial garments. **10:** The kingship of the God of Israel. **13:** Compare Ps.98.4-9.

He will judge the world with
righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

97 The LORD reigns; let the earth
rejoice;

let the many coastlands be glad!

2 Clouds and thick darkness are
round about him;
righteousness and justice are the
foundation of his throne.

3 Fire goes before him,
and burns up his adversaries
round about.

4 His lightnings lighten the world;
the earth sees and trembles.

5 The mountains melt like wax before
the LORD,
before the Lord of all the earth.

6 The heavens proclaim his
righteousness;
and all the peoples behold his
glory.

7 All worshippers of images are put to
shame,
who make their boast in
worthless idols;
all gods bow down before him.

8 Zion hears and is glad,
and the daughters of Judah
rejoice,
because of thy judgments, O God.

9 For thou, O LORD, art most high
over all the earth;
thou art exalted far above all gods.

10 The LORD loves those who hate
evil;^k
he preserves the lives of his saints;
he delivers them from the hand of
the wicked.

11 Light dawns^l for the righteous,

and joy for the upright in heart.
12 Rejoice in the LORD, O you
righteous,
and give thanks to his holy name!

A Psalm.

98 O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous
things!

His right hand and his holy arm
have gotten him victory.

2 The LORD has made known his
victory,
he has revealed his vindication
in the sight of the nations.

3 He has remembered his steadfast
love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.

4 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all
the earth;
break forth into joyous song and
sing praises!

5 Sing praises to the LORD with the
lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of
melody!

6 With trumpets and the sound of the
horn
make a joyful noise before the
King, the LORD!

7 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who dwell in
it!

8 Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing for joy together

k Cn: Heb *You who love the LORD hate evil*
l Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *is sown*

Ps. 97: Hymn celebrating God's kingship. 1: Summons to worship the LORD as king. 2-6: The manifestation of the LORD (18.7-15; 50.1-3). 7: Idolaters will realize their folly (96.5). 8-9: Israel's faith will be vindicated. 10-11: Expression of confidence in the LORD's justice. 10: *Saints*, see 30.4 n. 12: Renewed call to worship.

Ps. 98: Hymn proclaiming the future establishment of God's kingship on the earth. 1: Summons to worship. 2-3: The LORD's triumph over all the powers that oppose him. Although the verbs are past tense, the reference is to a future event (compare 76.3; also Pss. 46; 47; 48.4-8). 4-9: Summons to all nations and to the physical universe to join in God's praise (96.7-13). The language in this and other of the "kingship" psalms is strikingly similar to that of many passages in Is. chs. 40-55 (e.g. 44.23; 52.10; 55.12).

- ⁹ before the LORD, for he comes
to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with
righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

- 99** The LORD reigns; let the
peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the
cherubim; let the earth
quake!
² The LORD is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
³ Let them praise thy great and
terrible name!
Holy is he!
⁴ Mighty King,^m lover of justice,
thou hast established equity;
thou hast executed justice
and righteousness in Jacob.
⁵ Extol the LORD our God;
worship at his footstool!
Holy is he!

- ⁶ Moses and Aaron were among his
priests,
Samuel also was among those
who called on his name.
They cried to the LORD, and he
answered them.
⁷ He spoke to them in the pillar of
cloud;
they kept his testimonies,
and the statutes that he gave them.
⁸ O LORD our God, thou didst answer
them;
thou wast a forgiving God to
them,
but an avenger of their
wrongdoings.
⁹ Extol the LORD our God,
and worship at his holy mountain;
for the LORD our God is holy!

A Psalm for the thank offering.

- 100** Make a joyful noise to the
LORD, all the lands!"
² Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come into his presence with
singing!
³ Know that the LORD is God!
It is he that made us, and we are
his;^o
we are his people, and the sheep
of his pasture.
⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him, bless his
name!
⁵ For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all
generations.

A Psalm of David.

- 101** I will sing of loyalty and of
justice;
to thee, O LORD, I will sing.
² I will give heed to the way that is
blameless.
Oh when wilt thou come to me?
I will walk with integrity of heart
within my house;
³ I will not set before my eyes
anything that is base.
I hate the work of those who fall
away;
it shall not cleave to me.
⁴ Perverseness of heart shall be far
from me;

^m Cn: Heb and the king's strength

ⁿ Heb land or earth

^o Another reading is and not we ourselves

Ps. 99: Hymn celebrating God's kingship. **1-3:** The LORD God of Israel is the ruler of the earth. **3:** *Holy is he!* is the refrain (see v. 5 and v. 9). **4-5:** God's concern for justice. **6-9:** His fidelity toward his people.

Ps. 100: Hymn calling on all nations to praise the LORD. While this psalm does not refer specifically to God as king, its mood is similar to that of the preceding "kingship" psalms (see Ps. 93 n) and it may be taken as a doxology for the collection.

Ps. 101: A king pledges himself to rule justly. This psalm may have been used as part of a coronation ceremony.

I will know nothing of evil.

⁵ Him who slanders his neighbor
secretly
I will destroy.
The man of haughty looks and
arrogant heart
I will not endure.

⁶ I will look with favor on the faithful
in the land,
that they may dwell with me;
he who walks in the way that is
blameless
shall minister to me.

⁷ No man who practices deceit
shall dwell in my house;
no man who utters lies
shall continue in my presence.

⁸ Morning by morning I will destroy
all the wicked in the land,
cutting off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.

A prayer of one afflicted, when he is
faint and pours out his complaint
before the LORD.

102 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
let my cry come to thee!

² Do not hide thy face from me
in the day of my distress!
Incline thy ear to me;
answer me speedily in the day
when I call!

³ For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.

⁴ My heart is smitten like grass, and
withered;
I forget to eat my bread.

⁵ Because of my loud groaning
my bones cleave to my flesh.

⁶ I am like a vulture^p of the
wilderness,
like an owl of the waste places;

⁷ I lie awake,

I am like a lonely bird on the
housetop.

⁸ All the day my enemies taunt me,
those who deride me use my name
for a curse.

⁹ For I eat ashes like bread,
and mingle tears with my drink,
¹⁰ because of thy indignation and
anger;
for thou hast taken me up and
thrown me away.

¹¹ My days are like an evening
shadow;
I wither away like grass.

¹² But thou, O LORD, art enthroned
for ever;
thy name endures to all
generations.

¹³ Thou wilt arise and have pity on
Zion;
it is the time to favor her;
the appointed time has come.

¹⁴ For thy servants hold her stones
dear,
and have pity on her dust.

¹⁵ The nations will fear the name of the
LORD,
and all the kings of the earth thy
glory.

¹⁶ For the LORD will build up Zion,
he will appear in his glory;

¹⁷ he will regard the prayer of the
destitute,
and will not despise their
supplication.

¹⁸ Let this be recorded for a generation
to come,
so that a people yet unborn may
praise the LORD:

¹⁹ that he looked down from his holy
height,
from heaven the LORD looked at
the earth,

²⁰ to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed
to die;

^p The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

Ps. 102: Prayer for healing in sickness (a lament). 1-2: Cry for help. 3-11 (and 23): The psalmist's situation. His pain torments him and his enemies regard him as forsaken by God. 12-22: He offers a hymn of praise to God; the words are perhaps quoted from a familiar song

- ²¹ that men may declare in Zion the name of the LORD,
and in Jerusalem his praise,
²² when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.
- ²³ He has broken my strength in mid-course;
he has shortened my days.
- ²⁴ "O my God," I say, "take me not hence
in the midst of my days,
thou whose years endure throughout all generations!"
- ²⁵ Of old thou didst lay the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of thy hands.
- ²⁶ They will perish, but thou dost endure;
they will all wear out like a garment:
Thou changest them like raiment,
and they pass away;
- ²⁷ but thou art the same, and thy years have no end.
- ²⁸ The children of thy servants shall dwell secure;
their posterity shall be established before thee.

A Psalm of David.

- 103** Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!
- ² Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
³ who forgives all your iniquity,

- who heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live^q
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ⁶ The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.
- ⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger for ever.
- ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor requite us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
- ¹³ As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who fear him.
- ¹⁴ For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.
- ¹⁵ As for man, his days are like grass;
he flourishes like a flower of the field;

^q Heb uncertain

of Zion anticipating the future glory of Jerusalem. **24:** His prayer. **25-28:** He concludes by again singing a fragment of a hymn, this time one in praise of God's eternity. **25-27:** Quoted in Heb.1.10-12. **27:** *Thou art the same*, literally, "Thou art he," compare Is.43.10,13,25.

Ps. 103: Thanksgiving for recovery from sickness. This might be classified as a hymn, but vv. 1-5 suggest that the words, though general, are intended to express the emotion of a particular individual on a specific occasion. **1-5:** The psalmist summons his whole being to praise God for what he has done; v. 3 and v. 4a show that he refers to physical healing. **3:** *Forgives all your iniquity*, see 32.1 n. *The Pit*, see 16.10 n. *Your*, the psalmist is addressing his soul (i.e. his self). **5:** *Like the eagle's*, the vigor of the eagle was proverbial (Is.40.31). **6-18:** The being of God, in his justice, love, and eternity, compared with the frail and transient nature of man. **15:** Compare Is.40.6-8.

- ¹⁶ for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.
- ¹⁷ But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,
- ¹⁸ to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.
- ¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.
- ²⁰ Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word!
- ²¹ Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will!
- ²² Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
- 104** Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD my God, thou art very great!
Thou art clothed with honor and majesty,
- ² who coverest thyself with light as with a garment,
who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent,
- ³ who hast laid the beams of thy chambers on the waters,
who makest the clouds thy chariot,
who ridest on the wings of the wind,
- ⁴ who makest the winds thy messengers,
fire and flame thy ministers.
- ⁵ Thou didst set the earth on its foundations,
so that it should never be shaken.
- ⁶ Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
- ⁷ At thy rebuke they fled;
at the sound of thy thunder they took to flight.
- ⁸ The mountains rose, the valleys sank down
to the place which thou didst appoint for them.
- ⁹ Thou didst set a bound which they should not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.
- ¹⁰ Thou makest springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
- ¹¹ they give drink to every beast of the field;
the wild asses quench their thirst.
- ¹² By them the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.
- ¹³ From thy lofty abode thou waterest the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy work.
- ¹⁴ Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for man to cultivate,^r
that he may bring forth food from the earth,
- ¹⁵ and wine to gladden the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine,
and bread to strengthen man's heart.
- ¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon which he planted.
- ¹⁷ In them the birds build their nests;

^r Or fodder for the animals that serve man

19–22: Conclusion, with a hymn-like summons to all created things to join their voices with that of the psalmist.

Ps. 104: Hymn to God the creator. **1:** Address. The first line was probably added in imitation of the preceding psalm (compare also v. 35). **2–4:** The creation of the heavens. The account is much more mythological than that of Gen. ch. 1. **2:** *Light*, compare Gen.1.3; 1 Tim.6.16. **3:** See 18.10 n. **4:** Quoted in Heb.1.7. **5–9:** The creation of the earth. **7–9:** God's victory over the waters, the symbol of chaos (see 93.3–4 n.). **10–18:** God's continuing care for the earth and

- the stork has her home in the fir trees.
- 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the badgers.
- 19 Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
- 20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night,
when all the beasts of the forest creep forth.
- 21 The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
- 22 When the sun rises, they get them away
and lie down in their dens.
- 23 Man goes forth to his work
and to his labor until the evening.
- 24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all;
the earth is full of thy creatures.
- 25 Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
which teems with things innumerable,
living things both small and great.
- 26 There go the ships,
and Leviathan which thou didst form to sport in it.
- 27 These all look to thee,
to give them their food in due season.
- 28 When thou givest to them, they gather it up;
when thou openest thy hand, they
- are filled with good things.
- 29 When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed;
when thou takest away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
- 30 When thou sendest forth thy Spirit,^s
they are created;
and thou renewest the face of the ground.
- 31 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever,
may the LORD rejoice in his works,
- 32 who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke!
- 33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
- 34 May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the LORD.
- 35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more!
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!

105 O give thanks to the LORD,
call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples!

2 Sing to him, sing praises to him,
tell of all his wonderful works!

3 Glory in his holy name;

^s Or *breath*

its inhabitants, animal and human. 19: God's careful demarcation of the limits of months and days. 24: The poet's exclamation of praise and admiration. 25-26: The wonders of the sea. 26: The monster *Leviathan* (see 74.12-17 n.) has become, for this author, merely a harmless, sportive creature of God. 27-30: All living things depend on God at every moment for their existence. 31: Concluding act of praise. 35: The psalmist prays for the restoration of the original, intended harmony of creation. Ancient Hebrew man tended to use the personal and concrete words (*sinner*s . . . *wicked*) where we should use the impersonal and abstract ("sin," "wickedness"). *Praise the LORD!* (Hebrew "Hallelujah!") belongs to the beginning of the following psalm (see 105 n.).

Ps. 105: The story of God's great deeds on behalf of his people (compare Ps. 78). This psalm, now paired with Ps. 106, was composed for use at one of the major festivals and consists of a recital of the basic events which created the nation of Israel; its mood is one of grateful recollection. Both 105 and 106 at some point in their history were provided with the ritual shout "Hallelujah!" (*Praise the LORD!*) at the beginning and end (see 104.35 n.). 1-6: Hymn-like

let the hearts of those who seek
the LORD rejoice!
⁴ Seek the LORD and his strength,
seek his presence continually!
⁵ Remember the wonderful works
that he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments
he uttered,
⁶ O offspring of Abraham his servant,
sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!
⁷ He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
⁸ He is mindful of his covenant for
ever,
of the word that he commanded,
for a thousand generations,
⁹ the covenant which he made with
Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
¹⁰ which he confirmed to Jacob as a
statute,
to Israel as an everlasting
covenant,
¹¹ saying, "To you I will give the land
of Canaan
as your portion for an
inheritance."
¹² When they were few in number,
of little account, and sojourners in
it,
¹³ wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another
people,
¹⁴ he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their
account,
¹⁵ saying, "Touch not my anointed
ones,
do my prophets no harm!"
¹⁶ When he summoned a famine on
the land,
and broke every staff of bread,
¹⁷ he had sent a man ahead of them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.

¹⁸ His feet were hurt with fetters,
his neck was put in a collar of
iron;
¹⁹ until what he had said came to pass
the word of the LORD tested him.
²⁰ The king sent and released him,
the ruler of the peoples set him
free;
²¹ he made him lord of his house,
and ruler of all his possessions,
²² to instruct^t his princes at his
pleasure,
and to teach his elders wisdom.
²³ Then Israel came to Egypt;
Jacob sojourned in the land of
Ham.
²⁴ And the LORD made his people
very fruitful,
and made them stronger than
their foes.
²⁵ He turned their hearts to hate his
people,
to deal craftily with his servants.
²⁶ He sent Moses his servant,
and Aaron whom he had chosen.
²⁷ They wrought his signs among
them,
and miracles in the land of Ham.
²⁸ He sent darkness, and made the
land dark;
they rebelled^u against his words.
²⁹ He turned their waters into blood,
and caused their fish to die.
³⁰ Their land swarmed with frogs,
even in the chambers of their
kings.
³¹ He spoke, and there came swarms
of flies,
and gnats throughout their
country.
³² He gave them hail for rain,
and lightning that flashed through
their land.

^t Gk Syr Jerome: Heb to bind

^u Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb they did not rebel

introduction summoning the congregation to praise and thanksgiving. 7-11: The psalmist's theme: God's faithfulness to his covenant with Israel's ancestors (Gen.15.18-21; 17.1-8; 26.1-5; 28.10-15). 12-41: The narrative. 12-15: The story of the patriarchs. 14: *Rebuked kings*, Gen. 12.17; 20.3. 15: Only here are the patriarchs given the title *anointed ones*, presumably because they are called *prophets* (compare Gen.20.7; 1 Kg.19.16). 16-22: The story of Joseph (Gen. chs. 37; 39-50). 23-38: The story of the Exodus (Ex.1.1-15.21). 27: *Ham*, see 78.51 n.

³³ He smote their vines and fig trees,
 and shattered the trees of their
 country.
³⁴ He spoke, and the locusts came,
 and young locusts without
 number;
³⁵ which devoured all the vegetation
 in their land,
 and ate up the fruit of their
 ground.
³⁶ He smote all the first-born in their
 land,
 the first issue of all their strength.
³⁷ Then he led forth Israel with silver
 and gold,
 and there was none among his
 tribes who stumbled.
³⁸ Egypt was glad when they departed,
 for dread of them had fallen upon
 it.
³⁹ He spread a cloud for a covering,
 and fire to give light by night.
⁴⁰ They asked, and he brought quails,
 and gave them bread from
 heaven in abundance.
⁴¹ He opened the rock, and water
 gushed forth;
 it flowed through the desert like
 a river.
⁴² For he remembered his holy
 promise,
 and Abraham his servant.
⁴³ So he led forth his people with joy,
 his chosen ones with singing.
⁴⁴ And he gave them the lands of the
 nations;
 and they took possession of the
 fruit of the peoples' toil,

⁴⁵ to the end that they should keep his
 statutes,
 and observe his laws.
 Praise the LORD!

106 Praise the LORD!
 O give thanks to the LORD,
 for he is good;
 for his steadfast love endures for
 ever!
² Who can utter the mighty doings
 of the LORD,
 or show forth all his praise?
³ Blessed are they who observe
 justice,
 who do righteousness at all times!
⁴ Remember me, O LORD, when thou
 showest favor to thy people;
 help me when thou deliverest
 them;
⁵ that I may see the prosperity of thy
 chosen ones,
 that I may rejoice in the gladness
 of thy nation,
 that I may glory with thy
 heritage.
⁶ Both we and our fathers have
 sinned;
 we have committed iniquity, we
 have done wickedly.
⁷ Our fathers, when they were in
 Egypt,
 did not consider thy wonderful
 works;
 they did not remember the
 abundance of thy steadfast love,
 but rebelled against the Most
 High^v at the Red Sea.

^v Cn Compare 78.17, 56: Heb *at the sea*

39–42: Incidents from the wilderness wanderings (Ex.13.21–22; 16.13–15; 17.6). It is remarkable that no mention is made of the giving of the Law or any of the other events at Sinai (Ex. 19.1–Num. 10.10). **43–45:** Return of the theme: God fulfilled his part in the covenant by giving Israel the land of Canaan. **45:** Israel must be faithful to her part of the covenant by obeying God's laws (95.7b–11).

Ps. 106: The story of God's great deeds, with confession of sin and prayer for help. In contrast to Ps. 105, the mood of this psalm is a somber one, stress being laid on the perversity and obtuseness of the people. **1–2:** Call to praise the LORD. **3:** The need for right-doing on the part of his worshipers (105.45). **4–5:** The psalmist prays that he may share in Israel's blessings when God restores prosperity to her (compare v. 47). **6:** The theme: Whatever God has done, Israel has always been unfaithful (vv. 7,13–14,19,21,24–25,28–29,32,34–39,43); nevertheless he has constantly forgiven her disobedience and shown mercy (vv. 8,15,23,30,44–46). This thought encourages the psalmist to offer the prayer in v. 47. **7–46:** The narrative. **7–12:** The story of

- ⁸ Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
that he might make known his mighty power.
- ⁹ He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry;
and he led them through the deep as through a desert.
- ¹⁰ So he saved them from the hand of the foe,
and delivered them from the power of the enemy.
- ¹¹ And the waters covered their adversaries;
not one of them was left.
- ¹² Then they believed his words;
they sang his praise.
- ¹³ But they soon forgot his works;
they did not wait for his counsel.
- ¹⁴ But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness,
and put God to the test in the desert;
- ¹⁵ he gave them what they asked,
but sent a wasting disease among them.
- ¹⁶ When men in the camp were jealous of Moses
and Aaron, the holy one of the LORD,
- ¹⁷ the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
and covered the company of Abi'ram.
- ¹⁸ Fire also broke out in their company;
the flame burned up the wicked.
- ¹⁹ They made a calf in Horeb
and worshiped a molten image.
- ²⁰ They exchanged the glory of God
for the image of an ox that eats grass.
- ²¹ They forgot God, their Savior,
who had done great things in Egypt,
- ²² wondrous works in the land of Ham,

- and terrible things by the Red Sea.
- ²³ Therefore he said he would destroy them—
had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him,
to turn away his wrath from destroying them.
- ²⁴ Then they despised the pleasant land,
having no faith in his promise.
- ²⁵ They murmured in their tents,
and did not obey the voice of the LORD.
- ²⁶ Therefore he raised his hand and swore to them
that he would make them fall in the wilderness,
- ²⁷ and would disperse^w their descendants among the nations,
scattering them over the lands.
- ²⁸ Then they attached themselves to the Ba'al of Pe'or,
and ate sacrifices offered to the dead;
- ²⁹ they provoked the LORD to anger with their doings,
and a plague broke out among them.
- ³⁰ Then Phin'ehas stood up and interposed,
and the plague was stayed.
- ³¹ And that has been reckoned to him as righteousness
from generation to generation for ever.
- ³² They angered him at the waters of Mer'ibah,
and it went ill with Moses on their account;
- ³³ for they made his spirit bitter,
and he spoke words that were rash.

^w Syr Compare Ezek 20.23: Heb *cause to fall*

the Exodus (105.23-38). 13-33: Incidents in the wilderness wanderings and at Sinai. 13-15: The manna and quails (Num.11.4-6,31-35). 16-18: Dathan and Abiram's rebellion (Num. ch. 16). 19-23: The golden calf (Ex. ch. 32). 19: Horeb, alternative name for Mount Sinai. 24-27: The refusal to enter Canaan (Num.14.1-35). 28-31: Apostasy to the Baal of Peor (Num.25.1-13). 32-33: The waters of Meribah, Num.20.2-13 (compare Ex.17.1-7). 34-39: Israel's apostasies in

- ³⁴ They did not destroy the peoples,
as the LORD commanded them,
³⁵ but they mingled with the nations
and learned to do as they did.
³⁶ They served their idols,
which became a snare to them.
³⁷ They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to the
demons;
³⁸ they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and
daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of
Canaan;
and the land was polluted with
blood.
³⁹ Thus they became unclean by their
acts,
and played the harlot in their
doings.
- ⁴⁰ Then the anger of the LORD was
kindled against his people,
and he abhorred his heritage;
⁴¹ he gave them into the hand of the
nations,
so that those who hated them
ruled over them.
⁴² Their enemies oppressed them,
and they were brought into
subjection under their power.
⁴³ Many times he delivered them,
but they were rebellious in their
purposes,
and were brought low through
their iniquity.
⁴⁴ Nevertheless he regarded their
distress,
when he heard their cry.
⁴⁵ He remembered for their sake his
covenant,
and relented according to the
abundance of his steadfast love.
⁴⁶ He caused them to be pitied

by all those who held them
captive.

- ⁴⁷ Save us, O LORD our God,
and gather us from among the
nations,
that we may give thanks to thy holy
name
and glory in thy praise.
- ⁴⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God of
Israel,
for everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, "Amen!"
Praise the LORD!

BOOK V

- 107** O give thanks to the LORD, for
he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for
ever!
- ² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
whom he has redeemed from
trouble
- ³ and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.
- ⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to a city to dwell in;
⁵ hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.
- ⁶ Then they cried to the LORD in
their trouble,
and he delivered them from their
distress;
- ⁷ he led them by a straight way,
till they reached a city to dwell
in.
- ⁸ Let them thank the LORD for his
steadfast love,

the days of the judges (Jg.2.11-19). **47:** Prayer that Israel may be delivered in her present distress. *Gather us from among the nations* suggests that the psalm, in its present form at least, dates from after the Babylonian exile. **48:** A doxology (no original part of the psalm) marking the end of Book IV of the Psalter (see 41.13 n.). *Praise the LORD!* has been illogically attached to this verse rather than the preceding verse (see n. at beginning of Ps. 105).

Ps. 107: A group thanksgiving for pilgrims. This psalm was perhaps sung by groups of pilgrims who came to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the feasts, offering thanks for escape from various dangers. **1-3:** Call for everyone to give thanks. **4-9:** Thanksgiving of those who traveled across the desert. **8-9:** A refrain (see vv. 15-16, 21-22, 31-32), appropriately varied for each

- for his wonderful works to the
sons of men!
- ⁹ For he satisfies him who is thirsty,
and the hungry he fills with good
things.
- ¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and in gloom,
prisoners in affliction and in irons,
¹¹ for they had rebelled against the
words of God,
and spurned the counsel of the
Most High.
- ¹² Their hearts were bowed down with
hard labor;
they fell down, with none to help.
- ¹³ Then they cried to the LORD in their
trouble,
and he delivered them from their
distress;
- ¹⁴ he brought them out of darkness
and gloom,
and broke their bonds asunder.
- ¹⁵ Let them thank the LORD for his
steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to the
sons of men!
- ¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze,
and cuts in two the bars of iron.
- ¹⁷ Some were sick* through their
sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities
suffered affliction;
- ¹⁸ they loathed any kind of food,
and they drew near to the gates
of death.
- ¹⁹ Then they cried to the LORD in
their trouble,
and he delivered them from their
distress;
- ²⁰ he sent forth his word, and healed
them,
and delivered them from
destruction.
- ²¹ Let them thank the LORD for his
steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to the
sons of men!
- ²² And let them offer sacrifices of
thanksgiving,
and tell of his deeds in songs of
joy!
- ²³ Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the great
waters;
- ²⁴ they saw the deeds of the LORD,
his wondrous works in the deep.
- ²⁵ For he commanded, and raised the
stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the
sea.
- ²⁶ They mounted up to heaven, they
went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in
their evil plight;
- ²⁷ they reeled and staggered like
drunken men,
and were at their wits' end.
- ²⁸ Then they cried to the LORD in their
trouble,
and he delivered them from their
distress;
- ²⁹ he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were
hushed.
- ³⁰ Then they were glad because they
had quiet,
and he brought them to their
desired haven.
- ³¹ Let them thank the LORD for his
steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to the
sons of men!
- ³² Let them extol him in the
congregation of the people,
and praise him in the assembly of
the elders.
- ³³ He turns rivers into a desert,
springs of water into thirsty
ground,
- ³⁴ a fruitful land into a salty waste,
because of the wickedness of its
inhabitants.

x Cn: Heb fools

occasion. 10-16: Thanksgiving of those who had been freed from prison. 17-22: Thanksgiving of those healed from sickness. 22: *Sacrifices of thanksgiving*, see 7.17 n. 23-32: Thanksgiving of those who had traveled by sea. 33-43: Part of a hymn praising God for his bounty; it was probably not originally composed to go with the preceding verses, but nevertheless provides a suitable unison conclusion for the thanksgiving liturgy.

PSALMS 108, 109

- ³⁵ He turns a desert into pools of water,
a parched land into springs of
water.
- ³⁶ And there he lets the hungry dwell,
and they establish a city to live in;
- ³⁷ they sow fields, and plant vineyards,
and get a fruitful yield.
- ³⁸ By his blessing they multiply
greatly;
and he does not let their cattle
decrease.
- ³⁹ When they are diminished and
brought low
through oppression, trouble, and
sorrow,
- ⁴⁰ he pours contempt upon princes
and makes them wander in
trackless wastes;
- ⁴¹ but he raises up the needy out of
affliction,
and makes their families like
flocks.
- ⁴² The upright see it and are glad;
and all wickedness stops its
mouth.
- ⁴³ Whoever is wise, let him give heed
to these things;
let men consider the steadfast
love of the LORD.

A Song. A Psalm of David.

- 108** My heart is steadfast, O God,
my heart is steadfast!
I will sing and make melody!
Awake, my soul!
- ² Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will awake the dawn!
- ³ I will give thanks to thee, O LORD,
among the peoples,
I will sing praises to thee among
the nations.
- ⁴ For thy steadfast love is great above
the heavens,

"O grant us help against the foe!"

- thy faithfulness reaches to the
clouds.
- ⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the
heavens!
Let thy glory be over all the
earth!
- ⁶ That thy beloved may be delivered,
give help by thy right hand, and
answer me!
- ⁷ God has promised in his sanctuary:^y
"With exultation I will divide up
Shechem,
and portion out the Vale of
Succoth.
- ⁸ Gilead is mine; Manas'seh is mine;
E'phraim is my helmet;
Judah my scepter.
- ⁹ Moab is my washbasin;
upon Edom I cast my shoe;
over Philistia I shout in triumph."
- ¹⁰ Who will bring me to the fortified
city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
- ¹¹ Hast thou not rejected us, O God?
Thou dost not go forth, O God,
with our armies.
- ¹² O grant us help against the foe,
for vain is the help of man!
- ¹³ With God we shall do valiantly;
it is he who will tread down our
foes.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 109** Be not silent, O God of my
praise!
- ² For wicked and deceitful mouths
are opened against me,
speaking against me with lying
tongues.
- ³ They beset me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause.

^y Or by his holiness

Ps. 108: A liturgy of prayer for victory over national enemies. This liturgy is entirely composed of portions of two other psalms. Verses 1-5 are practically identical with 57.7-11; vv. 6-13, with 60.5-12. For details of interpretation see those psalms.

Ps. 109: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1: Cry for help. 2-5: The psalmist's situation. He has been cursed and falsely accused of crime (compare vv. 22-25).

- ⁴ In return for my love they accuse me,
even as I make prayer for them.^z
⁵ So they reward me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.
- ⁶ Appoint a wicked man against him;
let an accuser bring him to trial.^a
⁷ When he is tried, let him come forth guilty;
let his prayer be counted as sin!
⁸ May his days be few;
may another seize his goods!
⁹ May his children be fatherless,
and his wife a widow!
¹⁰ May his children wander about
and beg;
may they be driven out of^b the
ruins they inhabit!
¹¹ May the creditor seize all that he
has;
may strangers plunder the fruits
of his toil!
¹² Let there be none to extend
kindness to him,
nor any to pity his fatherless
children!
¹³ May his posterity be cut off;
may his name be blotted out in
the second generation!
¹⁴ May the iniquity of his fathers be
remembered before the LORD,
and let not the sin of his mother
be blotted out!
¹⁵ Let them be before the LORD
continually;
and may his^c memory be cut
off from the earth!
¹⁶ For he did not remember to show
kindness,
but pursued the poor and needy
and the brokenhearted to their
death.
¹⁷ He loved to curse; let curses come
on him!
He did not like blessing; may it
be far from him!
- ¹⁸ He clothed himself with cursing as
his coat,
may it soak into his body like
water,
like oil into his bones!
¹⁹ May it be like a garment which he
wraps round him,
like a belt with which he daily
girds himself!
- ²⁰ May this be the reward of my
accusers from the LORD,
of those who speak evil against
my life!
²¹ But thou, O GOD my Lord,
deal on my behalf for thy name's
sake;
because thy steadfast love is
good, deliver me!
²² For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is stricken within
me.
²³ I am gone, like a shadow at evening;
I am shaken off like a locust.
²⁴ My knees are weak through fasting;
my body has become gaunt.
²⁵ I am an object of scorn to my
accusers;
when they see me, they wag their
heads.
- ²⁶ Help me, O LORD my God!
Save me according to thy
steadfast love!
²⁷ Let them know that this is thy hand;
thou, O LORD, hast done it!
²⁸ Let them curse, but do thou bless!
Let my assailants be put to
shame;^d may thy servant be
glad!
²⁹ May my accusers be clothed with
dishonor;
may they be wrapped in their
own shame as in a mantle!

^z Syr: Heb *I pray*^a Heb *stand at his right hand*^b Gk: Heb *and seek*^c Gk: Heb *their*^d Gk: Heb *they have arisen and have been put to shame*

4-5: In view of the temper of vv. 6-19, it is important to note that he believed love for others to be the proper attitude and was accustomed to pray for them. 6-19: The curse. It is clear that the purpose of the violent and repellent language of this section is to provide a counter-curse which will be effective against the black-magic curses of the psalmist's enemies (note vv. 17-19). Compare Ps. 58. 8: The second line is quoted in Acts 1.20, though translated differently. 20-29: Prayer for deliverance. The poet does not share the popular, primitive belief that his curse

- ³⁰ With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD;
I will praise him in the midst of the throng.
³¹ For he stands at the right hand of the needy,
to save him from those who condemn him to death.

A Psalm of David.

110 The LORD says to my lord:
"Sit at my right hand,
till I make your enemies your footstool."

- ² The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your foes!
³ Your people will offer themselves freely
on the day you lead your host upon the holy mountains.^e
From the womb of the morning like dew your youth^f will come to you.
⁴ The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind,
"You are a priest for ever
after the order of Melchiz'edek."
⁵ The Lord is at your right hand;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
⁶ He will execute judgment among the nations,

- filling them with corpses;
he will shatter chiefs^g
over the wide earth.
⁷ He will drink from the brook by the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

- 111** Praise the LORD.
I will give thanks to the LORD
with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
² Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who have pleasure in them.
³ Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures for ever.
⁴ He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.
⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.
⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.
⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy,
⁸ they are established for ever and ever,

^e Another reading is *in holy array*^f Cn: Heb *the dew of your youth*^g Or *the head*

would be automatically efficacious apart from the personal intervention of God. **30-31:** His vow (see 7.17 n.).

Ps. 110: The LORD promises victory to his king (a royal psalm, probably composed for a coronation; compare Ps. 2). The Hebrew text is unusually corrupt and the interpretation of many details extremely difficult. **1:** The king (*my lord*) is invited by Israel's God (*the LORD*) to ascend the throne. This verse is quoted frequently in the New Testament (e.g. Mt.22.44; Acts 2.34; 1 Cor.15.25; Eph.1.20; Heb.1.3,13), where the later Jewish belief that it was composed by David in honor of the Messiah is naturally assumed to be correct. **2-7:** The new king, who also bears the dignity of priesthood, will thoroughly defeat his enemies. **3:** The meaning of the second sentence can no longer be recovered with certainty. **4:** Like all early Israelite kings, the new king will have the privileges of a priest (compare 2 Sam.8.18; 1 Kg.3.4). In this respect he will be like Melchizedek, the ancient Canaanite priest-king of Jerusalem (Gen.14.18). **7:** The meaning is not clear. The verse may be only a fragment.

Ps. 111: Hymn of praise to the LORD for his great deeds, especially for his fidelity to the covenant. An acrostic psalm, every line beginning with a successive letter of the alphabet. **1:** Like the two following psalms, it begins with the ritual cry, *Praise the LORD!* (Hallelujah!); see 104.35 n. **10:** Job 28.28; Pr.1.7.

to be performed with faithfulness
and uprightness.

⁹ He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant
for ever.

Holy and terrible is his name!

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the
beginning of wisdom;
a good understanding have all
those who practice it.
His praise endures for ever!

112 Praise the LORD.
Blessed is the man who fears
the LORD,
who greatly delights in his
commandments!

² His descendants will be mighty in
the land;
the generation of the upright will
be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in his house;
and his righteousness endures for
ever.

⁴ Light rises in the darkness for the
upright;
the LORD^h is gracious, merciful,
and righteous.

⁵ It is well with the man who deals
generously and lends,
who conducts his affairs with
justice.

⁶ For the righteous will never be
moved;
he will be remembered for ever.

⁷ He is not afraid of evil tidings;
his heart is firm, trusting in the
LORD.

⁸ His heart is steady, he will not be
afraid,
until he sees his desire on his
adversaries.

⁹ He has distributed freely, he has
given to the poor;
his righteousness endures for
ever;
his horn is exalted in honor.

¹⁰ The wicked man sees it and is
angry;
he gnashes his teeth and melts
away;
the desire of the wicked man
comes to nought.

113 Praise the LORD!
Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD!

² Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time forth and for
evermore!

³ From the rising of the sun to its
setting
the name of the LORD is to be
praised!

⁴ The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens!

⁵ Who is like the LORD our God,
who is seated on high,

⁶ who looks far down
upon the heavens and the earth?

⁷ He raises the poor from the dust,
and lifts the needy from the ash
heap,

⁸ to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.

⁹ He gives the barren woman a home,
making her the joyous mother of
children.

Praise the LORD!

114 When Israel went forth from
Egypt,

^h Gk: Heb lacks the LORD

Ps. 112: The contrasting fate of the righteous and the wicked (a wisdom psalm). An acrostic like Ps. 111, and similar in theme to Ps. 1. It is, however, more concerned with the rewards of righteousness (vv. 1-9) than the punishment of ungodliness (v. 10). 1: *Praise the LORD*, see 111.1 n. *Blessed*, see 1.1 n. 9: Quoted in part in 2 Cor.9.9. *Horn*, see 75.4-5 n.

Ps. 113: Hymn celebrating the LORD as helper of the humble. Another "Hallelujah!" psalm (see 111.1 n.). In Jewish liturgical tradition, Pss. 113-118 constitute the so-called "Egyptian Hallel," used in connection with the great festivals. At the Passover, Pss. 113-114 are sung before the meal; 115-118 afterwards (compare Mt.26.30). 1: Summons to worship. 2-4: Choral response. 5-9: Though the LORD is gloriously exalted, he cares for the needy (1 Sam.2.4-8; Lk.1.48-53).

Ps. 114: Hymn in praise of God's great work in creating the nation. Although its form is unusual, vv. 7-8 show this psalm should be classified as a hymn (see Ps. 113 n.). 1-2: The events

the house of Jacob from a people
of strange language,
² Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.
³ The sea looked and fled,
Jordan turned back.
⁴ The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs.
⁵ What ails you, O sea, that you flee?
O Jordan, that you turn back?
⁶ O mountains, that you skip like
rams?
O hills, like lambs?
⁷ Tremble, O earth, at the presence
of the LORD,
at the presence of the God of
Jacob,
⁸ who turns the rock into a pool of
water,
the flint into a spring of water.
115 Not to us, O LORD, not to us,
but to thy name give glory,
for the sake of thy steadfast love
and thy faithfulness!
² Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
³ Our God is in the heavens;
he does whatever he pleases.
⁴ Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.
⁵ They have mouths, but do not
speak;
eyes, but do not see.
⁶ They have ears, but do not hear;
noses, but do not smell.
⁷ They have hands, but do not feel;
feet, but do not walk;

and they do not make a sound in
their throat.
⁸ Those who make them are like
them;
so are all who trust in them.
⁹ O Israel, trust in the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
¹⁰ O house of Aaron, put your trust in
the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
¹¹ You who fear the LORD, trust in
the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
¹² The LORD has been mindful of us;
he will bless us;
he will bless the house of Israel;
he will bless the house of Aaron;
¹³ he will bless those who fear the
LORD,
both small and great.
¹⁴ May the LORD give you increase,
you and your children!
¹⁵ May you be blessed by the LORD,
who made heaven and earth!
¹⁶ The heavens are the LORD's heavens,
but the earth he has given to the
sons of men.
¹⁷ The dead do not praise the LORD,
nor do any that go down into
silence.
¹⁸ But we will bless the LORD
from this time forth and for
evermore.
Praise the LORD!
116 I love the LORD, because he
has heard
my voice and my supplications.

of the Exodus recalled. 3-6: The remarkable natural phenomena which accompanied Israel's crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan. The past events of vv. 3-4 become contemporary in vv. 5-6. 7-8: The physical world summoned to worship the LORD. *Who turns the rock into a pool*, Ex.17.6; Num.20.11.

Ps. 115: Liturgy contrasting the LORD's power with the impotence of heathen gods. Perhaps sung antiphonally as follows: 1-2: A choir ascribes glory to God alone. 3-8: A soloist proclaims that God is omnipotent; idols have no life at all. 9-11: The choir therefore asks Israel to trust in the LORD. 10: *House of Aaron*, the priests. 12-13: The congregation confidently responds. 14-15: A priest pronounces a blessing. 16-18: Concluding hymn of praise. 17: In early Israel it was believed that the dead in Sheol (*silence*) were separated from God (88.5-6). 18: *Praise the LORD!* Hallelujah! (see Ps. 113 n.).

Ps. 116: Thanksgiving for healing. 1-2: Address to the congregation. 3-11: The psalmist's

- ² Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as
long as I live.
- ³ The snares of death encompassed
me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on
me;
I suffered distress and anguish.
- ⁴ Then I called on the name of the
LORD:
"O LORD, I beseech thee, save
my life!"
- ⁵ Gracious is the LORD, and
righteous;
our God is merciful.
- ⁶ The LORD preserves the simple;
when I was brought low, he saved
me.
- ⁷ Return, O my soul, to your rest;
for the LORD has dealt
bountifully with you.
- ⁸ For thou hast delivered my soul
from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling;
- ⁹ I walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.
- ¹⁰ I kept my faith, even when I said,
"I am greatly afflicted";
- ¹¹ I said in my consternation,
"Men are all a vain hope."
- ¹² What shall I render to the LORD
for all his bounty to me?
- ¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD,
- ¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

- ¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his saints.
- ¹⁶ O LORD, I am thy servant;
I am thy servant, the son of thy
handmaid.
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
- ¹⁷ I will offer to thee the sacrifice of
thanksgiving
and call on the name of the LORD.
- ¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,
- ¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the
LORD,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!
- 117** Praise the LORD, all nations!
Extol him, all peoples!
- ² For great is his steadfast love
toward us;
and the faithfulness of the LORD
endures for ever.
Praise the LORD!
- 118** O give thanks to the LORD, for
he is good;
his steadfast love endures for
ever!
- ² Let Israel say,
"His steadfast love endures for
ever."
- ³ Let the house of Aaron say,
"His steadfast love endures for
ever."
- ⁴ Let those who fear the LORD say,
"His steadfast love endures for
ever."
- ⁵ Out of my distress I called on the
LORD;

experience (see 18.4–6 n.). **3:** His illness. *Sheol*, see 6.5 n. **5–8:** Strong emotion leads the psalmist to address God directly in describing the answer to his prayer (v. 8). **9:** Now he has recovered. **10–11:** Even when most profoundly depressed, he had trusted in God rather than men. **12–19:** The fulfilment of his vow (see 7.17 n.). **13:** He offers a libation (Ex.29.40). **15:** *Precious . . . is the death* means that such a death is rarely allowed to happen. *Saints*, see 30.4 n. **16:** See 86.16 n. **19:** *Praise the LORD!* Hallelujah! (see Ps. 113 n.).

Ps. 117: Doxology. **1.** *Praise the LORD!* Hallelujah! (see Ps. 113 n.). **2:** *Praise the LORD!* properly belongs to the following psalm.

Ps. 118: Thanksgiving for deliverance in battle. The last of the "Egyptian Hallel" psalms (see Ps. 113 n.). While it is difficult to be sure whether the language of vv. 10–14 is literal or figurative, it is tenable that the speaker is a king who has come to the temple to offer thanks for a victory. **1–4:** Summons to thanksgiving. **2–4:** *Let Israel say*, etc. These are probably actual directions to various groups in the congregation. **3:** *House of Aaron*, see 115.10 n. **5–18:** The

- the LORD answered me and set me free.
- ⁶ With the LORD on my side I do not fear.
What can man do to me?
- ⁷ The LORD is on my side to help me;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.
- ⁸ It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
- ⁹ It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.
- ¹⁰ All nations surrounded me;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
- ¹¹ They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
- ¹² They surrounded me like bees, they blazedⁱ like a fire of thorns;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
- ¹³ I was pushed hard,^j so that I was falling,
but the LORD helped me.
- ¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.
- ¹⁵ Hark, glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:
"The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,
- ¹⁶ the right hand of the LORD is exalted,
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!"
- ¹⁷ I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.

"This is the day which the LORD has made"

- ¹⁸ The LORD has chastened me sorely, but he has not given me over to death.
- ¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.
- ²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.
- ²¹ I thank thee that thou hast answered me and hast become my salvation.
- ²² The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.
- ²³ This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.
- ²⁴ This is the day which the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- ²⁵ Save us, we beseech thee, O LORD!
O LORD, we beseech thee, give us success!
- ²⁶ Blessed be he who enters in the name of the LORD!
We bless you from the house of the LORD
- ²⁷ The LORD is God, and he has given us light.
Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar!
- ²⁸ Thou art my God, and I will give thanks to thee;

ⁱ Gk: Heb were extinguished

^j Gk Syr Jerome: Heb thou didst push me hard

psalmist's experience (see 18.4-6 n.). **6:** Quoted in Heb.13.6. **10-13:** The desperateness of his situation. **14-18:** God gave him the victory. **19:** He asks to be admitted at the temple gates. The preceding ceremony evidently took place outside. **20:** A voice from within replies that only the qualified may enter (compare Ps. 15 and 24.3-6). **21-22:** He answers that God had borne witness to his character by delivering him (18.20-24) when others had given him up. **22-23:** Frequently quoted in the New Testament (e.g. Mt.21.42; Acts 4.11; 1 Pet.2.7). **23-25:** The choir joyously acknowledges what God has done. **25:** *Save us*, in Hebrew, is "Hoshianna" (Hosanna). This verse and the following are alluded to in Mt.21.9 and parallel passages. **26-27:** The suppliant is admitted with a choral blessing. (The second sentence of v. 27 is perhaps a liturgical direction.) **28:** He makes his act of thanksgiving. **29:** The choir begins a hymn of praise (compare Ps. 136).

- thou art my God, I will extol thee.
- ²⁹ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!
- 119** Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD!
² Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,
who seek him with their whole heart,
³ who also do no wrong,
but walk in his ways!
⁴ Thou hast commanded thy precepts to be kept diligently.
⁵ O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping thy statutes!
⁶ Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all thy commandments.
⁷ I will praise thee with an upright heart,
when I learn thy righteous ordinances.
⁸ I will observe thy statutes;
O forsake me not utterly!
- ⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure?
By guarding it according to thy word.
- ¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek thee;
let me not wander from thy commandments!
- ¹¹ I have laid up thy word in my heart,
that I might not sin against thee.
- ¹² Blessed be thou, O LORD;
teach me thy statutes!
- ¹³ With my lips I declare
all the ordinances of thy mouth.
- ¹⁴ In the way of thy testimonies I delight
as much as in all riches.
- ¹⁵ I will meditate on thy precepts,
and fix my eyes on thy ways.
- ¹⁶ I will delight in thy statutes;
I will not forget thy word.
- ¹⁷ Deal bountifully with thy servant,
that I may live and observe thy word.
- ¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of thy law.
- ¹⁹ I am a sojourner on earth;
hide not thy commandments from me!
- ²⁰ My soul is consumed with longing
for thy ordinances at all times.
- ²¹ Thou dost rebuke the insolent,
accursed ones,
who wander from thy commandments;
- ²² take away from me their scorn and contempt,
for I have kept thy testimonies.
- ²³ Even though princes sit plotting
against me,
thy servant will meditate on thy statutes.
- ²⁴ Thy testimonies are my delight,
they are my counselors.
- ²⁵ My soul cleaves to the dust;
revive me according to thy word!
- ²⁶ When I told of my ways, thou didst answer me;
teach me thy statutes!
- ²⁷ Make me understand the way of
thy precepts,
and I will meditate on thy wondrous works.
- ²⁸ My soul melts away for sorrow;
strengthen me according to thy word!

Ps. 119: Meditation on the law of God. The length of this psalm is the result of its unusual, and highly artificial, structure. It is an alphabetical acrostic (compare Pss. 9–10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 145) in which each stanza consists of eight lines all beginning with the same Hebrew letter. In addition almost every line contains the word "law" or a synonym (e.g. "testimonies," "ways," "precepts"; compare Ps. 19.7–14). The predominant mood of lament suggests that it may have been composed as a prayer for deliverance from trouble, though the language may be merely imitative and the whole a purely literary exercise in honor of the written law. It is a very late composition. **1–8, 9–16:** Prayer for help in observing the law. **1:** *Blessed*, see 1.1 n. **17–24:** Prayer for deliverance from enemies. **25–32:** Declaration of fidelity to the law. **33–40:** Prayer

- ²⁹ Put false ways far from me;
and graciously teach me thy law!
³⁰ I have chosen the way of
faithfulness,
I set thy ordinances before me.
³¹ I cleave to thy testimonies,
O LORD;
let me not be put to shame!
³² I will run in the way of thy
commandments
when thou enlargest my
understanding!
³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy
statutes;
and I will keep it to the end.
³⁴ Give me understanding, that I may
keep thy law
and observe it with my whole
heart.
³⁵ Lead me in the path of thy
commandments,
for I delight in it.
³⁶ Incline my heart to thy testimonies,
and not to gain!
³⁷ Turn my eyes from looking at
vanities;
and give me life in thy ways.
³⁸ Confirm to thy servant thy promise,
which is for those who fear thee.
³⁹ Turn away the reproach which I
dread;
for thy ordinances are good.
⁴⁰ Behold, I long for thy precepts;
in thy righteousness give me life!
⁴¹ Let thy steadfast love come to me,
O LORD,
thy salvation according to thy
promise;
⁴² then shall I have an answer for those
who taunt me,
for I trust in thy word.
⁴³ And take not the word of truth
utterly out of my mouth,
for my hope is in thy ordinances.
⁴⁴ I will keep thy law continually,
for ever and ever;
⁴⁵ and I shall walk at liberty,
for I have sought thy precepts.
- ⁴⁶ I will also speak of thy testimonies
before kings,
and shall not be put to shame;
⁴⁷ for I find my delight in thy
commandments,
which I love.
⁴⁸ I revere thy commandments, which
I love,
and I will meditate on thy statutes.
⁴⁹ Remember thy word to thy servant,
in which thou hast made me hope.
⁵⁰ This is my comfort in my affliction
that thy promise gives me life.
⁵¹ Godless men utterly deride me,
but I do not turn away from thy
law.
⁵² When I think of thy ordinances
from of old,
I take comfort, O LORD.
⁵³ Hot indignation seizes me because
of the wicked,
who forsake thy law.
⁵⁴ Thy statutes have been my songs
in the house of my pilgrimage.
⁵⁵ I remember thy name in the night,
O LORD,
and keep thy law.
⁵⁶ This blessing has fallen to me,
that I have kept thy precepts.
⁵⁷ The LORD is my portion;
I promise to keep thy words.
⁵⁸ I entreat thy favor with all my
heart;
be gracious to me according to thy
promise.
⁵⁹ When I think of thy ways,
I turn my feet to thy testimonies;
⁶⁰ I hasten and do not delay
to keep thy commandments.
⁶¹ Though the cords of the wicked
ensnare me,
I do not forget thy law.
⁶² At midnight I rise to praise thee,
because of thy righteous
ordinances.
⁶³ I am a companion of all who fear
thee,
of those who keep thy precepts.

to understand the law. **41-48:** Prayer for an answer to taunters. **49-56:** Expression of confidence during persecution. **57-64:** Declaration of devotion to God. **65-72:** Recognition of the

- ⁶⁴ The earth, O LORD, is full of thy steadfast love;
teach me thy statutes!
- ⁶⁵ Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,
O LORD, according to thy word.
- ⁶⁶ Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
for I believe in thy commandments.
- ⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray;
but now I keep thy word.
- ⁶⁸ Thou art good and doest good;
teach me thy statutes.
- ⁶⁹ The godless besmear me with lies,
but with my whole heart I keep thy precepts;
- ⁷⁰ their heart is gross like fat,
but I delight in thy law.
- ⁷¹ It is good for me that I was afflicted,
that I might learn thy statutes.
- ⁷² The law of thy mouth is better to me
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.
- ⁷³ Thy hands have made and fashioned me;
give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments.
- ⁷⁴ Those who fear thee shall see me and rejoice,
because I have hoped in thy word.
- ⁷⁵ I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right,
and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.
- ⁷⁶ Let thy steadfast love be ready to comfort me
according to thy promise to thy servant.
- ⁷⁷ Let thy mercy come to me, that I may live;
for thy law is my delight.
- ⁷⁸ Let the godless be put to shame,
because they have subverted me with guile;
as for me, I will meditate on thy precepts.
- ⁷⁹ Let those who fear thee turn to me,
that they may know thy testimonies.
- ⁸⁰ May my heart be blameless in thy statutes,
that I may not be put to shame!
- ⁸¹ My soul languishes for thy salvation;
I hope in thy word.
- ⁸² My eyes fail with watching for thy promise;
I ask, "When wilt thou comfort me?"
- ⁸³ For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,
yet I have not forgotten thy statutes.
- ⁸⁴ How long must thy servant endure?
When wilt thou judge those who persecute me?
- ⁸⁵ Godless men have dug pitfalls for me,
men who do not conform to thy law.
- ⁸⁶ All thy commandments are sure;
they persecute me with falsehood;
help me!
- ⁸⁷ They have almost made an end of me on earth;
but I have not forsaken thy precepts.
- ⁸⁸ In thy steadfast love spare my life,
that I may keep the testimonies of thy mouth.
- ⁸⁹ For ever, O LORD, thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens.
- ⁹⁰ Thy faithfulness endures to all generations;
thou hast established the earth,
and it stands fast.
- ⁹¹ By thy appointment they stand this day;
for all things are thy servants.
- ⁹² If thy law had not been my delight,
I should have perished in my affliction.
- ⁹³ I will never forget thy precepts;
for by them thou hast given me life.
- ⁹⁴ I am thine, save me;

disciplinary value of suffering. **73-80:** Acknowledgment of the justice of God's ways, and prayer for help. **81-88:** Plea for deliverance from enemies. **89-96:** Faith in God's word. **97-104:**

- for I have sought thy precepts.
⁹⁵ The wicked lie in wait to destroy me;
 but I consider thy testimonies.
⁹⁶ I have seen a limit to all perfection,
 but thy commandment is
 exceedingly broad.
- ⁹⁷ Oh, how I love thy law!
 It is my meditation all the day.
⁹⁸ Thy commandment makes me wiser
 than my enemies,
 for it is ever with me.
⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all
 my teachers,
 for thy testimonies are my
 meditation.
¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the aged,
 for I keep thy precepts.
¹⁰¹ I hold back my feet from every
 evil way,
 in order to keep thy word.
¹⁰² I do not turn aside from thy
 ordinances,
 for thou hast taught me.
¹⁰³ How sweet are thy words to my
 taste,
 sweeter than honey to my mouth!
¹⁰⁴ Through thy precepts I get
 understanding;
 therefore I hate every false way.
- ¹⁰⁵ Thy word is a lamp to my feet
 and a light to my path.
¹⁰⁶ I have sworn an oath and
 confirmed it,
 to observe thy righteous
 ordinances.
¹⁰⁷ I am sorely afflicted;
 give me life, O LORD, according
 to thy word!
¹⁰⁸ Accept my offerings of praise, O
 LORD,
 and teach me thy ordinances.
¹⁰⁹ I hold my life in my hand
 continually,
 but I do not forget thy law.
¹¹⁰ The wicked have laid a snare for me,
 but I do not stray from thy
 precepts.
¹¹¹ Thy testimonies are my heritage
 for ever;
- yea, they are the joy of my heart.
¹¹² I incline my heart to perform
 thy statutes
 for ever, to the end.
- ¹¹³ I hate double-minded men,
 but I love thy law.
¹¹⁴ Thou art my hiding place and my
 shield;
 I hope in thy word.
¹¹⁵ Depart from me, you evildoers,
 that I may keep the
 commandments of my God.
¹¹⁶ Uphold me according to thy
 promise, that I may live,
 and let me not be put to shame in
 my hope!
¹¹⁷ Hold me up, that I may be safe
 and have regard for thy statutes
 continually!
¹¹⁸ Thou dost spurn all who go astray
 from thy statutes;
 yea, their cunning is in vain.
¹¹⁹ All the wicked of the earth thou
 dost count as dross;
 therefore I love thy testimonies.
¹²⁰ My flesh trembles for fear of thee,
 and I am afraid of thy judgments.
- ¹²¹ I have done what is just and right;
 do not leave me to my oppressors.
¹²² Be surety for thy servant for good;
 let not the godless oppress me.
¹²³ My eyes fail with watching for thy
 salvation,
 and for the fulfilment of thy
 righteous promise.
¹²⁴ Deal with thy servant according to
 thy steadfast love,
 and teach me thy statutes.
¹²⁵ I am thy servant; give me
 understanding,
 that I may know thy testimonies!
¹²⁶ It is time for the LORD to act,
 for thy law has been broken.
¹²⁷ Therefore I love thy
 commandments
 above gold, above fine gold.
¹²⁸ Therefore I direct my steps by all
 thy precepts;^k

^k Gk Jerome: Heb uncertain

The beauty and sweetness of the law. **105-112:** Prayer for help. **113-120:** Expression of confidence and prayers for deliverance. **121-128:** Declaration of juridical innocence and loyalty

I hate every false way.

¹²⁹ Thy testimonies are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.

¹³⁰ The unfolding of thy words gives
light;
it imparts understanding to the
simple.

¹³¹ With open mouth I pant,
because I long for thy
commandments.

¹³² Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is thy wont toward those who
love thy name.

¹³³ Keep steady my steps according to
thy promise,
and let no iniquity get dominion
over me.

¹³⁴ Redeem me from man's
oppression,
that I may keep thy precepts.

¹³⁵ Make thy face shine upon thy
servant,
and teach me thy statutes.

¹³⁶ My eyes shed streams of tears,
because men do not keep thy law.

¹³⁷ Righteous art thou, O LORD,
and right are thy judgments.

¹³⁸ Thou hast appointed thy
testimonies in righteousness
and in all faithfulness.

¹³⁹ My zeal consumes me,
because my foes forget thy words.

¹⁴⁰ Thy promise is well tried,
and thy servant loves it.

¹⁴¹ I am small and despised,
yet I do not forget thy precepts.

¹⁴² Thy righteousness is righteous for
ever,
and thy law is true.

¹⁴³ Trouble and anguish have come
upon me,
but thy commandments are my
delight.

¹⁴⁴ Thy testimonies are righteous for
ever;
give me understanding that I may
live.

¹⁴⁵ With my whole heart I cry; answer
me, O LORD!

I will keep thy statutes.

¹⁴⁶ I cry to thee; save me,
that I may observe thy
testimonies.

¹⁴⁷ I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I hope in thy words.

¹⁴⁸ My eyes are awake before the
watches of the night,
that I may meditate upon thy
promise.

¹⁴⁹ Hear my voice in thy steadfast
love;
O LORD, in thy justice preserve
my life.

¹⁵⁰ They draw near who persecute me
with evil purpose;
they are far from thy law.

¹⁵¹ But thou art near, O LORD,
and all thy commandments are
true.

¹⁵² Long have I known from thy
testimonies
that thou hast founded them for
ever.

¹⁵³ Look on my affliction and deliver
me,
for I do not forget thy law.

¹⁵⁴ Plead my cause and redeem me;
give me life according to thy
promise!

¹⁵⁵ Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek thy statutes.

¹⁵⁶ Great is thy mercy, O LORD;
give me life according to thy
justice.

¹⁵⁷ Many are my persecutors and my
adversaries,
but I do not swerve from thy
testimonies.

¹⁵⁸ I look at the faithless with disgust,
because they do not keep thy
commands.

¹⁵⁹ Consider how I love thy precepts!
Preserve my life according to thy
steadfast love.

¹⁶⁰ The sum of thy word is truth;

to the law. **129-136:** Praise of the law and prayer for deliverance from enemies. **137-144:** Acknowledgment of God's justice. **145-152:** Passionate cry to be saved from persecution. **153-160:** Prayer for the preservation of the psalmist's life.

and every one of thy righteous
ordinances endures for ever.

- ¹⁶¹ Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of thy
words.
- ¹⁶² I rejoice at thy word
like one who finds great spoil.
- ¹⁶³ I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love thy law.
- ¹⁶⁴ Seven times a day I praise thee
for thy righteous ordinances.
- ¹⁶⁵ Great peace have those who love
thy law;
nothing can make them stumble.
- ¹⁶⁶ I hope for thy salvation, O LORD,
and I do thy commandments.
- ¹⁶⁷ My soul keeps thy testimonies;
I love them exceedingly.
- ¹⁶⁸ I keep thy precepts and testimonies,
for all my ways are before thee.
- ¹⁶⁹ Let my cry come before thee, O
LORD;
give me understanding
according to thy word!
- ¹⁷⁰ Let my supplication come before
thee;
deliver me according to thy word.
- ¹⁷¹ My lips will pour forth praise
that thou dost teach me thy
statutes.
- ¹⁷² My tongue will sing of thy word,
for all thy commandments are
right.
- ¹⁷³ Let thy hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen thy precepts.
- ¹⁷⁴ I long for thy salvation, O LORD,
and thy law is my delight.
- ¹⁷⁵ Let me live, that I may praise thee,
and let thy ordinances help me.
- ¹⁷⁶ I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
seek thy servant,
for I do not forget thy
commandments.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills"

A Song of Ascents.

- 120** In my distress I cry to the
LORD,
that he may answer me:
² "Deliver me, O LORD,
from lying lips,
from a deceitful tongue."
- ³ What shall be given to you?
And what more shall be done to
you,
you deceitful tongue?
- ⁴ A warrior's sharp arrows,
with glowing coals of the broom
tree!
- ⁵ Woe is me, that I sojourn in
Meshech,
that I dwell among the tents of
Kedar!
- ⁶ Too long have I had my dwelling
among those who hate peace.
- ⁷ I am for peace;
but when I speak,
they are for war!

A Song of Ascents.

- 121** I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From whence does my help
come?
- ² My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not let your foot be moved,
he who keeps you will not slumber.
- ⁴ Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade
on your right hand.

161-168: His piety contrasted with the unjust actions of his persecutors. **169-176:** If delivered, he vows to sing the praise of God's law.

Ps. 120: An exile's prayer for deliverance from enemies (a lament). **4:** The broom tree produces a specially hot, long-burning fire. **5:** *Meshech . . . Kedar*, remote regions in Asia Minor and north Arabia. The psalmist lives in such a place, far from his native soil.

Ps. 121: A liturgy of blessing. **1:** The psalmist asks a rhetorical question. *The hills* may be the "high places" where the baals, the local fertility gods, were worshiped (2 Kg.23.5). **2-8:** A priest answers and pronounces a blessing. **2:** Probably *my* should be emended to "your" (compare v. 3).

- ¹ The sun shall not smite you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- ² The LORD will keep you from all
evil;
he will keep your life.
- ³ The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and for
evermore.

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

- 122** I was glad when they said to
me,
"Let us go to the house of the
LORD!"
- ² Our feet have been standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem!
- ³ Jerusalem, built as a city
which is bound firmly together,
⁴ to which the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the
LORD.
- ⁵ There thrones for judgment were set,
the thrones of the house of David.
- ⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
"May they prosper who love you!"
- ⁷ Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers!"
- ⁸ For my brethren and companions'
sake
I will say, "Peace be within you!"
- ⁹ For the sake of the house of the
LORD our God,
I will seek your good.

A Song of Ascents.

- 123** To thee I lift up my eyes,
O thou who art enthroned
in the heavens!

Ps. 122: A song praising Zion as the pilgrim's goal. 1-5: Arrived in Jerusalem, a group of pilgrims admire its buildings and the unity it symbolizes. 6-9: They pray for its continuing prosperity.

Ps. 123: Prayer for deliverance from enemies (a group lament). 1-2: An act of humble submission to God's will. 3-4: Prayer for help. The speakers may represent either Israel or some oppressed class or sect within it.

Ps. 124: Thanksgiving for a national deliverance. 4-5: Compare 32.6; 69.1-2, 14-15.

- ² Behold, as the eyes of servants
look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maid
to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the LORD our
God,
till he have mercy upon us.
- ³ Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have
mercy upon us,
for we have had more than enough
of contempt.
- ⁴ Too long our soul has been sated
with the scorn of those who are at
ease,
the contempt of the proud.

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

- 124** If it had not been the LORD
who was on our side,
let Israel now say—
- ² if it had not been the LORD who was
on our side,
when men rose up against us,
³ then they would have swallowed us
up alive,
when their anger was kindled
against us;
- ⁴ then the flood would have swept us
away,
the torrent would have gone over
us;
- ⁵ then over us would have gone
the raging waters.
- ⁶ Blessed be the LORD,
who has not given us
as prey to their teeth!
- ⁷ We have escaped as a bird
from the snare of the fowlers;
the snare is broken,
and we have escaped!
- ⁸ Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

A Song of Ascents.

125 Those who trust in the LORD
are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides
for ever.

² As the mountains are round about
Jerusalem,
so the LORD is round about his
people,
from this time forth and for
evermore.

³ For the scepter of wickedness shall
not rest
upon the land allotted to the
righteous,
lest the righteous put forth
their hands to do wrong.

⁴ Do good, O LORD, to those who are
good,
and to those who are upright in
their hearts!

⁵ But those who turn aside upon their
crooked ways
the LORD will lead away with
evildoers!
Peace be in Israel!

A Song of Ascents.

126 When the LORD restored the
fortunes of Zion,¹
we were like those who dream.

² Then our mouth was filled with
laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things
for them."

³ The LORD has done great things for
us;
we are glad.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb!

⁵ May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy!

⁶ He that goes forth weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him.

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

127 Unless the LORD builds the
house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over the
city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

² It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for^m he gives to his beloved
sleep.

³ Lo, sons are a heritage from the
LORD,

the fruit of the womb a reward.

⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons of one's youth.

⁵ Happy is the man who has
his quiver full of them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies
in the gate.

A Song of Ascents.

128 Blessed is every one who
fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways!

¹ Or brought back those who returned to Zion
^m Another reading is so

Ps. 125: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a group lament). **1-3:** Expression of confidence. **4-5:** Prayer for help.

Ps. 126: Prayer for deliverance from national misfortune. **1-3:** The joy inspired by God's favor toward his people in former times. **4-6:** Prayer that it may be granted once again. **4:** *Negeb*, the arid region to the south of Palestine.

Ps. 127: A safe home and a large family are the LORD's gift (a wisdom psalm). **1-2:** Anxiety has no place in the life of the faithful (compare Mt.6.25-34). **3-5:** The gift of many stalwart sons makes a father feel secure.

Ps. 128: A large and prosperous family is a reward for devotion to the LORD (a wisdom psalm). **1:** *Blessed*, see 1.1 n.

² You shall eat the fruit of the labor of
your hands;
you shall be happy, and it shall be
well with you.

³ Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.

⁴ Lo, thus shall the man be blessed
who fears the LORD.

⁵ The LORD bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of
Jerusalem
all the days of your life!
⁶ May you see your children's
children!
Peace be upon Israel!

A Song of Ascents.

129 "Sorely have they afflicted me
from my youth,"
let Israel now say—

² "Sorely have they afflicted me from
my youth,
yet they have not prevailed against
me.

³ The plowers plowed upon my back;
they made long their furrows."

⁴ The LORD is righteous;
he has cut the cords of the wicked.

⁵ May all who hate Zion
be put to shame and turned
backward!

⁶ Let them be like the grass on the
housetops,
which withers before it grows up,

⁷ with which the reaper does not fill
his hand
or the binder of sheaves his bosom,

⁸ while those who pass by do not say,
"The blessing of the LORD be upon
you!

We bless you in the name of the
LORD!"

A Song of Ascents.

130 Out of the depths I cry to thee,
O LORD!

² Lord, hear my voice!
Let thy ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!

³ If thou, O LORD, shouldst mark
iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But there is forgiveness with thee,
that thou mayest be feared.

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

⁶ my soul waits for the LORD
more than watchmen for the
morning,
more than watchmen for the
morning.

⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is
steadfast love,
and with him is plenteous
redemption.

⁸ And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

131 O LORD, my heart is not lifted
up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for
me.

² But I have calmed and quieted my
soul,
like a child quieted at its mother's
breast;

Ps. 129: Prayer for deliverance from national enemies (a group lament). 1-4: God has preserved Israel in spite of all her suffering in the past. 5-8: May her present enemies be destroyed!

Ps. 130: Prayer for deliverance from personal trouble (a lament). 1-2: Cry for help. The psalmist's trouble is described only in general terms. 3-6: Because it is God's nature to be merciful, the psalmist eagerly awaits his help. 7-8: Israel should take the same attitude in her national difficulties.

Ps. 131: Act of humble submission to God's will and guidance (a song of trust; see Ps. 11 n.).

like a child that is quieted is my soul.

- ³ O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time forth and for
evermore.

A Song of Ascents.

- 132** Remember, O LORD, in
David's favor,
all the hardships he endured;
² how he swore to the LORD
and vowed to the Mighty One of
Jacob,
³ "I will not enter my house
or get into my bed;
⁴ I will not give sleep to my eyes
or slumber to my eyelids,
⁵ until I find a place for the LORD,
a dwelling place for the Mighty
One of Jacob."

- ⁶ Lo, we heard of it in Eph'rathah,
we found it in the fields of Ja'ar.

- ⁷ "Let us go to his dwelling place;
let us worship at his footstool!"

- ⁸ Arise, O LORD, and go to thy resting
place,
thou and the ark of thy might.

- ⁹ Let thy priests be clothed with
righteousness,
and let thy saints shout for joy.

- ¹⁰ For thy servant David's sake
do not turn away the face of thy
anointed one.

- ¹¹ The LORD swore to David a sure
oath
from which he will not turn back:

"One of the sons of your body
I will set on your throne.

- ¹² If your sons keep my covenant
and my testimonies which I shall
teach them,
their sons also for ever
shall sit upon your throne."

- ¹³ For the LORD has chosen Zion;
he has desired it for his
habitation:

- ¹⁴ "This is my resting place for ever;
here I will dwell, for I have
desired it.

- ¹⁵ I will abundantly bless her
provisions;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.

- ¹⁶ Her priests I will clothe with
salvation,
and her saints will shout for joy.

- ¹⁷ There I will make a horn to sprout
for David;
I have prepared a lamp for my
anointed.

- ¹⁸ His enemies I will clothe with shame,
but upon himself his crown will
shed its luster."

A Song of Ascents.

- 133** Behold, how good and
pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!

- ² It is like the precious oil upon the
head,
running down upon the beard,
upon the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his
robes!

- ³ It is like the dew of Hermon,

Ps. 132: Liturgy commemorating God's choice of Zion and the Davidic dynasty. 1-5: God is reminded of David's determination to provide him a sanctuary (2 Sam.7.1-2). 6-10: These words evidently accompanied a dramatic ceremony which re-enacted the discovery of the ark by David and the procession by which he brought it to the sanctuary (2 Sam.6.2-15). 6: *Eph'rathah*, Bethlehem, David's city. *The fields of Jaar*, Kiriath-jearim, where the ark had been kept from Samuel's time until David became king in Jerusalem (1 Sam.7.1-2; 2 Chr.1.4). 9: *Saints*, see 30.4 n. 11-18: A priest or temple prophet recites God's promise concerning Jerusalem and the dynasty.

Ps. 133: The joys of fraternal harmony (a wisdom psalm). 2: *Aaron*, the ancestor and type of the priests. Anointing with consecrated oil was part of the ordination ceremony (Ex.29.7). 3: *Hermon*, the chief mountain of Syria.

which falls on the mountains of
Zion!
For there the LORD has commanded
the blessing,
life for evermore.

A Song of Ascents.

134 Come, bless the LORD,
all you servants of the LORD,
who stand by night in the house of
the LORD!

² Lift up your hands to the holy place,
and bless the LORD!

³ May the LORD bless you from Zion,
he who made heaven and earth!

135 Praise the LORD.
Praise the name of the
LORD,
give praise, O servants of the
LORD,

² you that stand in the house of the
LORD,
in the courts of the house of our
God!

³ Praise the LORD, for the LORD is
good;
singing to his name, for he is gracious!

⁴ For the LORD has chosen Jacob for
himself,
Israel as his own possession.

⁵ For I know that the LORD is great,
and that our Lord is above all
gods.

⁶ Whatever the LORD pleases he does,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.

⁷ He it is who makes the clouds rise at
the end of the earth,
who makes lightnings for the rain
and brings forth the wind from his
storehouses.

⁸ He it was who smote the first-born
of Egypt,

both of man and of beast;

⁹ who in thy midst, O Egypt,
sent signs and wonders
against Pharaoh and all his
servants;

¹⁰ who smote many nations
and slew mighty kings,

¹¹ Sihon, king of the Amorites,
and Og, king of Bashan,
and all the kingdoms of Canaan,

¹² and gave their land as a heritage,
a heritage to his people Israel.

¹³ Thy name, O LORD, endures for
ever,
thy renown, O LORD, throughout
all ages.

¹⁴ For the LORD will vindicate his
people,
and have compassion on his
servants.

¹⁵ The idols of the nations are silver
and gold,
the work of men's hands.

¹⁶ They have mouths, but they speak
not,

they have eyes, but they see not,
¹⁷ they have ears, but they hear not,
nor is there any breath in their
mouths.

¹⁸ Like them be those who make
them!—
yea, every one who trusts in them!

¹⁹ O house of Israel, bless the LORD!
O house of Aaron, bless the LORD!

²⁰ O house of Levi, bless the LORD!
You that fear the LORD, bless the
LORD!

²¹ Blessed be the LORD from Zion,
he who dwells in Jerusalem!
Praise the LORD!

Ps. 134: A liturgy of blessing. 1-2: The priests are summoned to offer praise to the LORD.
3: They bless the congregation.

Ps. 135: Hymn praising the LORD for his mighty deeds. 1-4: Call to worship. 5-7: The LORD's control of nature. 8-12: His work in the Exodus and the conquest of Palestine. 11: *Sihon . . . Og*, Num.21.21-35. 13-14: A lyrical interlude. 15-18: The LORD's power contrasted with the impotence of heathen gods (compare 115.3-8). 19-21: Concluding summons to worship. 19: *House of Aaron . . . Levi*, the priests and their assistants, the Levites.

136 O give thanks to the LORD,
for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever.

² O give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever.

³ O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

⁴ to him who alone does great
wonders,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

⁵ to him who by understanding made
the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

⁶ to him who spread out the earth
upon the waters,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

⁷ to him who made the great lights,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

⁸ the sun to rule over the day,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

⁹ the moon and stars to rule over the
night,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹⁰ to him who smote the first-born of
Egypt,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹¹ and brought Israel out from among
them,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹² with a strong hand and an
outstretched arm,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹³ to him who divided the Red Sea in
sunder,

for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹⁴ and made Israel pass through the
midst of it,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹⁵ but overthrew Pharaoh and his host
in the Red Sea,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹⁶ to him who led his people through
the wilderness,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹⁷ to him who smote great kings,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹⁸ and slew famous kings,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

¹⁹ Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

²⁰ and Og, king of Bashan,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

²¹ and gave their land as a heritage,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

²² a heritage to Israel his servant,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever.

²³ It is he who remembered us in our
low estate,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

²⁴ and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever;

²⁵ he who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever.

²⁶ O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever.

Ps. 136: Thanksgiving for the LORD'S great deeds on behalf of his people. The second half of each verse is a congregational response. **1-3:** Summons to give thanks. **4-9:** God's work in creation. **10-22:** His work in the history of Israel. **10-15:** The Exodus. **16:** The wilderness wanderings. **17-22:** The conquest of Canaan. *Sihon . . . Og*, Num.21.21-35. **23-25:** Recapitulation. **26:** Concluding summons to give thanks.

137 By the waters^a of Babylon,
there we sat down and
wept,
when we remembered Zion.
² On the willows^b there
we hung up our lyres.
³ For there our captors
required of us songs,
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of
Zion!"
⁴ How shall we sing the LORD's song
in a foreign land?
⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
⁶ Let my tongue cleave to the roof of
my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy!
⁷ Remember, O LORD, against the
E'domites
the day of Jerusalem,
how they said, "Rase it, rase it!
Down to its foundations!"
⁸ O daughter of Babylon, you
devastator!^c
Happy shall he be who requites
you
with what you have done to us!
⁹ Happy shall he be who takes your
little ones
and dashes them against the rock!

A Psalm of David.

138 I give thee thanks, O LORD,
with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing thy praise;
² I bow down toward thy holy temple
and give thanks to thy name for thy

steadfast love and thy
faithfulness;
for thou hast exalted above
everything
thy name and thy word.^d
³ On the day I called, thou didst
answer me,
my strength of soul thou didst
increase.^e
⁴ All the kings of the earth shall praise
thee, O LORD,
for they have heard the words of
thy mouth;
⁵ and they shall sing of the ways of the
LORD,
for great is the glory of the LORD.
⁶ For though the LORD is high, he
regards the lowly;
but the haughty he knows from
afar.
⁷ Though I walk in the midst of
trouble,
thou dost preserve my life;
thou dost stretch out thy hand against
the wrath of my enemies,
and thy right hand delivers me.
⁸ The LORD will fulfil his purpose for
me;
thy steadfast love, O LORD,
endures for ever.
Do not forsake the work of thy
hands.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

139 O LORD, thou hast searched
me and known me!
^a Heb streams ^p Or poplars
^q Or you who are devastated
^r Cn: Heb thou hast exalted thy word above all thy name
^s Syr Compare Gk Tg: Heb thou didst make me arrogant
in my soul with strength

Ps. 137: Prayer for vengeance on Israel's enemies (a lament). **1-6:** Lament over the holy city. **1-4:** It is difficult to sing the LORD's praise when an exile among foreigners. **1:** *Waters of Babylon*, streams or canals of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. **3:** *Songs of Zion*, see 46.4-7 n. **5-6:** The psalmist's solemn pledge. **7-9:** Cry for revenge. **7:** *Edomites*, who helped the Babylonians sack Jerusalem in 587 (586) B.C. (Ob.10-14; 2 Kg.25.8-12). **8:** *Daughter of Babylon*, personification of the Babylonian people.

Ps. 138: Thanksgiving for deliverance from trouble. **1-2:** The psalmist in the temple court to offer thanks. **3:** His experience (compare 18.37-45). **4-6:** A hymn of praise. **7-8:** An expression of faith.

Ps. 139: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). **1-18:** An appeal to the

- ² Thou knowest when I sit down and
when I rise up;
thou discernest my thoughts from
afar.
- ³ Thou searchest out my path and my
lying down,
and art acquainted with all my
ways.
- ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
lo, O LORD, thou knowest it
altogether.
- ⁵ Thou dost beset me behind and
before,
and layest thy hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for
me;
it is high, I cannot attain it.
- ⁷ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy
presence?
- ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou
art there!
- ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of
the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there thy hand shall lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.
- ¹¹ If I say, "Let only darkness cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
- ¹² even the darkness is not dark to thee,
the night is bright as the day;
for darkness is as light with thee.
- ¹³ For thou didst form my inward parts,
thou didst knit me together in my
mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ I praise thee, for thou art fearful and
wonderful.^t
Wonderful are thy works!
Thou knowest me right well;
¹⁵ my frame was not hidden from
thee,
- when I was being made in
secret,
intricately wrought in the depths of
the earth.
- ¹⁶ Thy eyes beheld my unformed
substance;
in thy book were written, every
one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of
them.
- ¹⁷ How precious to me are thy thoughts,
O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- ¹⁸ If I would count them, they are more
than the sand.
When I awake, I am still with
thee.^u
- ¹⁹ O that thou wouldst slay the wicked,
O God,
and that men of blood would
depart from me,
- ²⁰ men who maliciously defy thee,
who lift themselves up against thee
for evil!^v
- ²¹ Do I not hate them that hate thee, O
LORD?
And do I not loathe them that rise
up against thee?
- ²² I hate them with perfect
hatred;
I count them my enemies.
- ²³ Search me, O God, and know my
heart!
Try me and know my
thoughts!
- ²⁴ And see if there be any wicked^w way
in me,
and lead me in the way
everlasting!^x

^t Cn Compare Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *fearful things I am wonderful*

^u Or *were I to come to the end I would still be with thee*

^v Cn: Heb uncertain

^w Heb *hurtful*

^x Or *the ancient way*. Compare Jer 6.16

LORD, on the basis of his omniscience and universal power, to demonstrate the psalmist's innocence and to save him (compare vv. 23–24). **1–6:** Everything the psalmist has ever done or thought is known to God. **7–12:** He could have committed no secret crimes, for God is with him everywhere. **8:** *Sheol*, see 88.5–6 n. It is a new thought that God is in Sheol as well as in heaven (see 115.17 n.). **13–16:** God formed him in the womb (poetically called *the depths of the earth*) and knew his character from his conception. **16:** *Thy book*, compare 40.7 n. **17–18:** Exclamation of wonder. **19–24:** Prayer for vindication and deliverance. **21:** The psalmist, a religious leader, does not hesitate to identify his enemies as God's enemies also.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

140 Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men;

² preserve me from violent men,
who plan evil things in their heart,
and stir up wars continually.

³ They make their tongue sharp as a serpent's,
and under their lips is the poison
of vipers. *Selah*

⁴ Guard me, O LORD, from the hands
of the wicked;
preserve me from violent men,
who have planned to trip up my
feet.

⁵ Arrogant men have hidden a trap for
me,
and with cords they have spread a
net,^y
by the wayside they have set
snares for me. *Selah*

⁶ I say to the LORD, Thou art my God;
give ear to the voice of my
supplications, O LORD!

⁷ O LORD, my Lord, my strong
deliverer,
thou hast covered my head in the
day of battle.

⁸ Grant not, O LORD, the desires of
the wicked;
do not further his evil plot! *Selah*

⁹ Those who surround me lift up their
head,^z
let the mischief of their lips
overwhelm them!

¹⁰ Let burning coals fall upon them!
Let them be cast into pits, no
more to rise!

¹¹ Let not the slanderer be established
in the land;
let evil hunt down the violent man
speedily!

¹² I know that the LORD maintains the
cause of the afflicted,
and executes justice for the needy.
¹³ Surely the righteous shall give thanks
to thy name;
the upright shall dwell in thy
presence.

A Psalm of David.

141 I call upon thee, O LORD; make
haste to me!

Give ear to my voice, when I call
to thee!

² Let my prayer be counted as incense
before thee,
and the lifting up of my hands as
an evening sacrifice!

³ Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD,
keep watch over the door of my
lips!

⁴ Incline not my heart to any evil,
to busy myself with wicked deeds
in company with men who work
iniquity;
and let me not eat of their
dainties!

⁵ Let a good man strike or rebuke me
in kindness,
but let the oil of the wicked never
anoint my head;^a
for my prayer is continually^b
against their wicked deeds.

⁶ When they are given over to those
who shall condemn them,
then they shall learn that the word
of the LORD is true.

⁷ As a rock which one cleaves and
shatters on the land,

^y Or they have spread cords as a net

^z Cn Compare Gk: Heb those who surround me are
uplifted in head

^a Gk: Heb obscure

^b Cn: Heb for continually and my prayer

Ps. 140: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1-2: Cry for help. 3-5: The psalmist's situation. 3: The mention of *their tongue* and *lips* probably implies that they have pronounced a curse against him (compare Pss. 58 and 109). *Selah*, see 3.2 n. 6-11: Prayer for deliverance. 7: *Covered my head*, given protection. 12-13: Expression of confidence.

Ps. 141: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1-2: Cry for help. *Evening sacrifice*, Ex.29.38-42; 1 Kg.18.36. 3-7: He prays that he may never compromise with the wicked, whose destruction is sure. 5: *Oil*, compare 133.2. 7: *Sheol*, see 88.3-6 n. 8-10: Prayer for deliverance.

so shall their bones be strewn at
the mouth of Sheol.^c

- ⁸ But my eyes are toward thee, O
LORD God;
in thee I seek refuge; leave me
not defenseless!
⁹ Keep me from the trap which they
have laid for me,
and from the snares of evildoers!
¹⁰ Let the wicked together fall into their
own nets,
while I escape.

A Maskil of David, when he was in the
cave. A Prayer.

- 142** I cry with my voice to the
LORD,
with my voice I make supplication
to the LORD,
² I pour out my complaint before him,
I tell my trouble before him.
³ When my spirit is faint,
thou knowest my way!
In the path where I walk
they have hidden a trap for me.
⁴ I look to the right and watch,^d
but there is none who takes notice
of me;
no refuge remains to me,
no man cares for me.
⁵ I cry to thee, O LORD;
I say, Thou art my refuge,
my portion in the land of the
living.
⁶ Give heed to my cry;
for I am brought very low!
Deliver me from my persecutors;
for they are too strong for me!
⁷ Bring me out of prison,
that I may give thanks to thy
name!
The righteous will surround me;
for thou wilt deal bountifully with
me.

A Psalm of David.

- 143** Hear my prayer, O LORD;
give ear to my supplications!
In thy faithfulness answer me, in
thy righteousness!
² Enter not into judgment with thy
servant;
for no man living is righteous
before thee.
³ For the enemy has pursued me;
he has crushed my life to the
ground;
he has made me sit in darkness
like those long dead.
⁴ Therefore my spirit faints within
me;
my heart within me is appalled.
⁵ I remember the days of old,
I meditate on all that thou hast
done;
I muse on what thy hands have
wrought.
⁶ I stretch out my hands to thee;
my soul thirsts for thee like a
parched land. *Selah*
⁷ Make haste to answer me, O LORD!
My spirit fails!
Hide not thy face from me,
lest I be like those who go down
to the Pit.
⁸ Let me hear in the morning of thy
steadfast love,
for in thee I put my trust.
Teach me the way I should go,
for to thee I lift up my soul.
⁹ Deliver me, O LORD, from my
enemies!
I have fled to thee for refuge!^e
¹⁰ Teach me to do thy will,
for thou art my God!
Let thy good spirit lead me
on a level path!

^c The Hebrew of verses 5-7 is obscure

^d Or Look to the right and watch

^e One Heb Ms Gk: Heb to thee I have hidden

Ps. 142: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1-3a: Cry for help. **3b-4:** The psalmist's situation. **5-7:** Prayer for deliverance.

Ps. 143: Prayer for deliverance from personal enemies (a lament). 1-2: Cry for vindication. **3-6:** The psalmist's situation. **6:** *Selah*, see 3.2 n. **7-12:** Prayer for deliverance. **7:** *Pit*, see 16.10 n.

- ¹¹ For thy name's sake, O LORD,
preserve my life!
In thy righteousness bring me out
of trouble!
¹² And in thy steadfast love cut off my
enemies,
and destroy all my adversaries,
for I am thy servant.

A Psalm of David.

- 144** Blessed be the LORD, my
rock,
who trains my hands for war,
and my fingers for battle;
² my rock^f and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield and he in whom I take
refuge,
who subdues the peoples under
him.^g
³ O LORD, what is man that thou dost
regard him,
or the son of man that thou dost
think of him?
⁴ Man is like a breath,
his days are like a passing shadow.
⁵ Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and
come down!
Touch the mountains that they
smoke!
⁶ Flash forth the lightning and scatter
them,
send out thy arrows and rout them!
⁷ Stretch forth thy hand from on high,
rescue me and deliver me from
the many waters,
from the hand of aliens,
⁸ whose mouths speak lies,
and whose right hand is a right
hand of falsehood.
⁹ I will sing a new song to thee, O
God;

- upon a ten-stringed harp I will
play to thee,
¹⁰ who givest victory to kings,
who rescuest David thy^h servant.
¹¹ Rescue me from the cruel sword,
and deliver me from the hand of
aliens,
whose mouths speak lies,
and whose right hand is a right
hand of falsehood.

- ¹² May our sons in their youth
be like plants full grown,
our daughters like corner pillars
cut for the structure of a palace;
¹³ may our garners be full,
providing all manner of store;
may our sheep bring forth
thousands
and ten thousands in our fields;
¹⁴ may our cattle be heavy with young,
suffering no mischance or failure
in bearing;
may there be no cry of distress in our
streets!
¹⁵ Happy the people to whom such
blessings fall!
Happy the people whose God is
the LORD!

A Song of Praise. Of David.

- 145** I will extol thee, my God and
King,
and bless thy name for ever and
ever.
² Every day I will bless thee,
and praise thy name for ever
and ever.
³ Great is the LORD, and greatly to
be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.

^f With 18.2 2 Sam 22.2: Heb *my steadfast love*
^g Another reading is *my people under me*
^h Heb *his*

Ps. 144: A king prays for deliverance from his enemies (a royal lament). 1-2: Praise to God for his protecting power. 3-4: The inadequacy of man (compare 8.4; 90.5-6; 146.3-4). 5-8: Prayer for victory (compare 18.6-17). 9-10: The vow (see 7.17 n.). 12-15: Prayer for a prosperous year, perhaps originally a separate psalm.

Ps. 145: Hymn epitomizing the character of the God of Israel. An acrostic psalm, each new verse beginning with the next in order of the Hebrew alphabet (see Ps. 119 n.); the verse beginning with the Hebrew letter "nun" appears as the third and fourth lines of verse 13 (see note *i*).

⁴ One generation shall laud thy works
to another,
and shall declare thy mighty acts.

⁵ On the glorious splendor of thy
majesty,
and on thy wondrous works, I will
meditate.

⁶ Men shall proclaim the might of thy
terrible acts,
and I will declare thy greatness.

⁷ They shall pour forth the fame of
thy abundant goodness,
and shall sing aloud of thy
righteousness.

⁸ The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in
steadfast love.

⁹ The LORD is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that
he has made.

¹⁰ All thy works shall give thanks to
thee, O LORD,
and all thy saints shall bless thee!

¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of thy
kingdom,
and tell of thy power,

¹² to make known to the sons of men
thy^h mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of thy^h
kingdom.

¹³ Thy kingdom is an everlasting
kingdom,
and thy dominion endures
throughout all generations.

The LORD is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds.ⁱ

¹⁴ The LORD upholds all who are
falling,
and raises up all who are bowed
down.

¹⁵ The eyes of all look to thee,
and thou givest them their food in
due season.

¹⁶ Thou openest thy hand,

thou satisfiest the desire of every
living thing.

¹⁷ The LORD is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.

¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call
upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.

¹⁹ He fulfils the desire of all who fear
him,
he also hears their cry, and saves
them.

²⁰ The LORD preserves all who love
him;
but all the wicked he will destroy.

²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of
the LORD,
and let all flesh bless his holy
name for ever and ever.

146 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!

² I will praise the LORD as long as I
live;
I will sing praises to my God while
I have being.

³ Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is
no help.

⁴ When his breath departs he returns
to his earth;
on that very day his plans perish.

⁵ Happy is he whose help is the God
of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,

⁶ who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith for ever;

⁷ who executes justice for the
oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

^h Heb his

ⁱ These two lines are supplied by one Hebrew Ms, Gk
and Syr

1-3: The psalmist's personal expression of praise. 4-7: God's wonderful deeds. 8-9: The love of God (Ex.34.6; Num.14.18; etc.). 10-13a: The kingship of God (see Ps. 93 n.). 13b-20: God's providential care for his creatures. 21: Return to the personal mood of vv. 1-3.

Ps. 146: Hymn praising God for his help. Pss. 146-150 all begin and end with "Hallelujah!" (see Ps.111.1 n.). 1-2: Personal expression of praise (compare 145.1-3). 3-4: The inadequacy

⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the sojourners,
he upholds the widow and the fatherless;
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰ The LORD will reign for ever,
thy God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

147 Praise the LORD!
For it is good to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is seemly.

² The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

³ He heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.

⁴ He determines the number of the stars,
he gives to all of them their names.

⁵ Great is our LORD, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.

⁶ The LORD lifts up the downtrodden,
he casts the wicked to the ground.

⁷ Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God upon the lyre!

⁸ He covers the heavens with clouds,
he prepares rain for the earth,
he makes grass grow upon the hills.

⁹ He gives to the beasts their food,
and to the young ravens which cry.

¹⁰ His delight is not in the strength of the horse,

nor his pleasure in the legs of a man;

¹¹ but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

¹² Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

¹³ For he strengthens the bars of your gates;

he blesses your sons within you.

¹⁴ He makes peace in your borders;
he fills you with the finest of the wheat.

¹⁵ He sends forth his command to the earth;

his word runs swiftly.

¹⁶ He gives snow like wool;
he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.

¹⁷ He casts forth his ice like morsels;
who can stand before his cold?

¹⁸ He sends forth his word, and melts them;

he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.

¹⁹ He declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and ordinances to Israel.

²⁰ He has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know his ordinances.
Praise the LORD!

148 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens,
praise him in the heights!

² Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his host!

³ Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD!

of man (compare 144.3-4). 5-9: The LORD gives help to all who need it. 10: Concluding expression of praise.

Ps. 147: Hymn praising God for his universal power and providential care. 4: Is.40.26. 16-18: Compare Job 37.9-11.

Ps. 148: Hymn calling upon all created things to praise the LORD. 1-6: All things in heaven

For he commanded and they were created.

⁶ And he established them for ever and ever;
he fixed their bounds which cannot be passed.¹

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,

⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰ Beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹² Young men and maidens together,
old men and children!

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,

for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him.

Praise the LORD!

149 Praise the LORD!
Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise in the assembly of the faithful!

² Let Israel be glad in his Maker,
let the sons of Zion rejoice in their King!

³ Let them praise his name with dancing,

making melody to him with timbrel and lyre!

⁴ For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with victory.

⁵ Let the faithful exult in glory;
let them sing for joy on their couches.

⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their throats
and two-edged swords in their hands,

⁷ to wreak vengeance on the nations
and chastisement on the peoples,

⁸ to bind their kings with chains
and their nobles with fetters of iron,

⁹ to execute on them the judgment written!

This is glory for all his faithful ones.

Praise the LORD!

150 Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!

² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his exceeding greatness!

³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!

⁴ Praise him with timbrel and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!

⁵ Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

⁶ Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD!

J Or he set a law which cannot pass away

called to praise him. 7-10: All animals, plants, and objects on earth called to praise him. 11-14: All men summoned to join in the chorus also. 14: *Horn*, see 75.4-5 n. *Saints*, see 30.4 n.

Ps. 149: Hymn to accompany a festival dance. 3: *Timbrel*, an instrument resembling a tambourine. 5: *On their couches*, the meaning is uncertain; perhaps reclining on couches was part of the festival drama. 6-9: The dance was evidently of war-like character.

Ps. 150: Doxology marking the end of the Psalter (compare 41.13). Verses 3-5 indicate the nature of the instrumental accompaniment to the psalms. 1: *Praise the LORD!* see Ps. 146 n. 3: *Lute*, a stringed instrument. 3: *Timbrel*, see 149.3 n. 6: The climax of the psalm and a fitting conclusion to the book of Psalms.

THE PROVERBS

The book of Proverbs is a compendium of moral and religious instruction as given to Jewish youth by professional sages in the post-exilic period. It includes much older material from the long tradition of such training in the wisdom deemed necessary for the good life. Proverbs is the most typical example of a "wisdom" book in the Old Testament (compare Job, Ecclesiastes), with its emphasis on moral probity based on religion, its teaching that reward and punishment follow in this life, its appeal to the lessons of experience rather than to revelation, and its brief but significant exploration of the nature of wisdom and of wisdom's relation to God.

The book is a small library of teaching materials of different origins and dates. Each of its four main parts (1.1–9.18; 10.1–22.16; 22.17–24.22; and 25.1–29.27) is a separate work with its own title; the title of the first is expanded in 1.2–6 so as to serve as an introduction stating the purpose of the scholar who assembled the various materials. Five smaller pieces appear as appendixes, one (24.23–34) attached to the third main section and the remainder placed together at the end of the book.

Book I (1.1–9.18) contains twelve extended discourses of admonition and warning, two poems in which Wisdom is personified as a prophetess (1.20–33; 8.1–36), and a poetic allegory contrasting Wisdom, the gracious hostess, and Folly, the wanton (9.1–6, 13–18). This material seems to come from a teacher of the fourth or third century B.C. who assembled and edited the whole work for use in his school.

Book II (10.1–22.16) and Book IV (25.1–29.27) are separately entitled "Proverbs of Solomon," and the same heading has been used by the editor in 1.1. It is hardly a claim, still less proof, of Solomonic authorship, but rather a conventional name for pithy maxims in poetic parallel lines, and dealing with virtues and vices and their consequences. Solomon's wisdom had become legendary, though his proverbs and songs are said to have concerned phenomena of nature rather than human behavior (1 Kg. 4.32–33).

Book III contains a series of exhortations resembling the "instructions" of Egyptian sages, and appears to have been modeled upon the Egyptian book of Wisdom entitled "The Instruction of Amen-em-ope," which may be older than 1000 B.C. To this is attached the first of the five appendixes, 24.23–34. The other appendixes are 30.1–9, a dialogue between a sceptic and a believer, recalling the book of Job; 30.10–33, admonitions and proverbs, chiefly of the progressive numerical type; 31.1–9, a queen mother's counsel to a young king; and 31.10–31, a portrait of the ideal wife of a prominent man.

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON, SON
of David, king of Israel:

knowledge and discretion to the
youth—

- ² That men may know wisdom and
instruction,
understand words of insight,
- ³ receive instruction in wise dealing,
righteousness, justice, and equity;
- ⁴ that prudence may be given to the
simple,

- ⁵ the wise man also may hear and
increase in learning,
and the man of understanding
acquire skill,
 - ⁶ to understand a proverb and a
figure,
the words of the wise and their
riddles.
-

1.1–9.18: Book I, prologue: Invitation to wisdom. 1.1: Title of the work, expanded from headings of Books II and IV (see Introduction). *Proverbs* include two-line maxims and also longer forms, such as parables and discourses.

1.2–6: The purpose of the teacher in assembling and editing the work is to serve the mental awakening and moral education of youth, and the further instruction of the mature. **6: A figure** is a metaphor, parable, or allegory such as in vv. 20–33. A **riddle** is a comparison or analogy which enforces a lesson when the hearer discerns its intention and is able to complete it (see 25.14; 26.7; 30.18–19).

⁷ The fear of the LORD is the
beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and
instruction.

⁸ Hear, my son, your father's
instruction,
and reject not your mother's
teaching;

⁹ for they are a fair garland for your
head,
and pendants for your neck.

¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice you,
do not consent.

¹¹ If they say, "Come with us, let us
lie in wait for blood,
let us wantonly ambush the
innocent;

¹² like Sheol let us swallow them alive
and whole, like those who go
down to the Pit;

¹³ we shall find all precious goods,
we shall fill our houses with spoil;

¹⁴ throw in your lot among us,
we will all have one purse"—

¹⁵ my son, do not walk in the way with
them,
hold back your foot from their
paths;

¹⁶ for their feet run to evil,
and they make haste to shed
blood.

¹⁷ For in vain is a net spread
in the sight of any bird;

¹⁸ but these men lie in wait for their
own blood,
they set an ambush for their own
lives.

¹⁹ Such are the ways of all who get
gain by violence;
it takes away the life of its
possessors.

²⁰ Wisdom cries aloud in the street;

in the markets she raises her
voice;

²¹ on the top of the walls^a she cries
out;
at the entrance of the city gates
she speaks:

²² "How long, O simple ones, will you
love being simple?
How long will scoffers delight in
their scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?

²³ Give heed^b to my reproof;
behold, I will pour out my
thoughts^c to you;
I will make my words known to
you.

²⁴ Because I have called and you
refused to listen,
have stretched out my hand and
no one has heeded,

²⁵ and you have ignored all my
counsel
and would have none of my
reproof,

²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when panic strikes
you,

²⁷ when panic strikes you like a storm,
and your calamity comes like a
whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come
upon you.

²⁸ Then they will call upon me, but I
will not answer;
they will seek me diligently but
will not find me.

²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the
LORD,

³⁰ would have none of my counsel,
and despised all my reproof,

³¹ therefore they shall eat the fruit of
their way

^a Heb uncertain

^b Heb Turn

^c Heb spirit

1.7: The theme of chs. 1-9: An attitude of reverent obedience toward God is the necessary preliminary and first stage of enlightenment.

1.8-19: Home-training is a moral safeguard. It will protect a youth going out into the world from temptation by criminals and the ruin which falls on them. **12: Sheol . . . the Pit**, i.e. the grave. Sheol is a common expression for death and the place and state of the dead (see Gen. 37.35 n.). **17: In vain . . . any bird** is a quotation of a popular proverb affirming that the consequences of crime are too obvious to be missed.

1.20-33: Wisdom personified as a prophetess. She denounces those who despise moral in-

and be sated with their own devices.
⁸² For the simple are killed by their turning away,
 and the complacency of fools destroys them;
⁸³ but he who listens to me will dwell secure
 and will be at ease, without dread of evil."

2 My son, if you receive my words
 and treasure up my commandments with you,
² making your ear attentive to wisdom
 and inclining your heart to understanding;
³ yes, if you cry out for insight
 and raise your voice for understanding,
⁴ if you seek it like silver
 and search for it as for hidden treasures;
⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
 and find the knowledge of God.
⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom;
 from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
⁷ he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
 he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
⁸ guarding the paths of justice
 and preserving the way of his saints.
⁹ Then you will understand righteousness and justice
 and equity, every good path;
¹⁰ for wisdom will come into your heart,
 and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
¹¹ discretion will watch over you;
 understanding will guard you;

¹² delivering you from the way of evil,
 from men of perverted speech,
¹³ who forsake the paths of uprightness
 to walk in the ways of darkness,
¹⁴ who rejoice in doing evil
 and delight in the perverseness of evil;
¹⁵ men whose paths are crooked,
 and who are devious in their ways.
¹⁶ You will be saved from the loose^d
 woman,
 from the adventuress^e with her smooth words,
¹⁷ who forsakes the companion of her youth
 and forgets the covenant of her God;
¹⁸ for her house sinks down to death,
 and her paths to the shades;
¹⁹ none who go to her come back
 nor do they regain the paths of life.
²⁰ So you will walk in the way of good men
 and keep to the paths of the righteous.
²¹ For the upright will inhabit the land,
 and men of integrity will remain in it;
²² but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
 and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

3 My son, do not forget my teaching,
 but let your heart keep my commandments;
² for length of days and years of life
 and abundant welfare will they give you.
³ Let not loyalty and faithfulness
 forsake you;

^d Heb strange ^e Heb foreign woman

struction, and who will realize their need of wisdom when it is too late. **32:** *Turning away*, i.e. waywardness.

2.1-22: The fruits of the search for wisdom. The pursuit of wisdom brings understanding of religion and morality, and its possession is an inner safeguard against bad companions and sexual immorality. **17:** *Covenant of her God*, i.e. "her covenant before God." Marital faithfulness is a sacred obligation (Gen.2.24; Hos. ch. 2; Mt.19.6).

3.1-12: The precepts of religion lead to physical and spiritual well-being; even misfortune becomes the discipline of a loving Father (v. 12). Knowledge without reverence is not enough.

- bind them about your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
- ⁴ So you will find favor and good repute^f
in the sight of God and man.
- ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
- ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
- ⁷ Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
- ⁸ It will be healing to your flesh^g
and refreshment^h to your bones.
- ⁹ Honor the LORD with your substance
and with the first fruits of all your produce;
- ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will be bursting with wine.
- ¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,
- ¹² for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights.
- ¹³ Happy is the man who finds wisdom,
and the man who gets understanding,
- ¹⁴ for the gain from it is better than gain from silver
and its profit better than gold.
- ¹⁵ She is more precious than jewels,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.
- ¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
- ¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
- ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
those who hold her fast are called happy.
- ¹⁹ The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding he established the heavens;
- ²⁰ by his knowledge the deeps broke forth,
and the clouds drop down the dew.
- ²¹ My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion;
let them not escape from your sight,ⁱ
- ²² and they will be life for your soul
and adornment for your neck.
- ²³ Then you will walk on your way securely
and your foot will not stumble.
- ²⁴ If you sit down,^j you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
- ²⁵ Do not be afraid of sudden panic,
or of the ruin^k of the wicked,
when it comes;
- ²⁶ for the LORD will be your confidence
and will keep your foot from being caught.

^f Cn: Heb *understanding* ^g Heb *navel*

^h Or *medicine*

ⁱ Reversing the order of the clauses

^j Gk: Heb *lie down* ^k Heb *storm*

3.13-18: True wealth is not measured in material things but in the abundant life and happiness which wisdom brings. **18:** The *tree of life* was a symbol of divine life and immortality in ancient mythology and art (compare Gen.3.22; Rev.2.7); here it is a metaphor for life itself.

3.19-20: Wisdom is divine, since the created world declares the wisdom of its Creator, an important theological idea, further developed in 8.22-31. *The deeps* were the abyss of waters under the earth (Ex.20.4) from which it was believed springs and floods *broke forth* (see Gen. 7.11 n.). The word here for *clouds* means the highest clouds, the sky.

3.21-35: Wisdom gives peace of mind through confidence in God. One should always do good and not harm, for God's blessing is on the one and his curse on the other. **25:** *Ruin*, or "fury." **34:** *Scorners*, or "arrogant."

²⁷ Do not withhold good from those
to whom it¹ is due,
when it is in your power to do it.

²⁸ Do not say to your neighbor, "Go,
and come again,
tomorrow I will give it"—when
you have it with you.

²⁹ Do not plan evil against your
neighbor
who dwells trustingly beside you.

³⁰ Do not contend with a man for no
reason,
when he has done you no harm.

³¹ Do not envy a man of violence
and do not choose any of his
ways;

³² for the perverse man is an
abomination to the LORD,
but the upright are in his
confidence.

³³ The LORD's curse is on the house of
the wicked,
but he blesses the abode of the
righteous.

³⁴ Toward the scorners he is scornful,
but to the humble he shows favor.

³⁵ The wise will inherit honor,
but fools get^m disgrace.

4 Hear, O sons, a father's
instruction,
and be attentive, that you may
gainⁿ insight;

² for I give you good precepts:
do not forsake my teaching.

³ When I was a son with my father,
tender, the only one in the sight of
my mother,

⁴ he taught me, and said to me,
"Let your heart hold fast my words;
keep my commandments, and
live;

⁵ do not forget, and do not turn away
from the words of my mouth.
Get wisdom; get insight.^o

⁶ Do not forsake her, and she will
keep you;
love her, and she will guard you.

⁷ The beginning of wisdom is this:
Get wisdom,

and whatever you get, get insight

⁸ Prize her highly,^p and she will exalt
you;
she will honor you if you embrace
her.

⁹ She will place on your head a fair
garland;
she will bestow on you a beautiful
crown."

¹⁰ Hear, my son, and accept my words,
that the years of your life may be
many.

¹¹ I have taught you the way of
wisdom;
I have led you in the paths of
uprightness.

¹² When you walk, your step will not
be hampered;
and if you run, you will not
stumble.

¹³ Keep hold of instruction, do not let
go;
guard her, for she is your life.

¹⁴ Do not enter the path of the wicked,
and do not walk in the way of evil
men.

¹⁵ Avoid it; do not go on it;
turn away from it and pass on.

¹⁶ For they cannot sleep unless they
have done wrong;
they are robbed of sleep unless
they have made some one
stumble.

¹⁷ For they eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.

¹⁸ But the path of the righteous is like
the light of dawn,
which shines brighter and brighter
until full day.

¹⁹ The way of the wicked is like deep
darkness;
they do not know over what they
stumble.

¹ Heb Do not withhold good from its owners

^m Cn: Heb exalt ⁿ Heb know

^o Reversing the order of the lines

^p The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

4.1-9: The teacher himself was directed toward wisdom by his parents. **7:** A father gives his child the first impulse toward wisdom, and the first lesson is reverence (1.7).

4.10-19: The pupil is admonished to profit by the lessons taught.

- ²⁰ My son, be attentive to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings.
²¹ Let them not escape from your sight;
keep them within your heart.
²² For they are life to him who finds
them,
and healing to all his flesh.
²³ Keep your heart with all vigilance;
for from it flow the springs of life.
²⁴ Put away from you crooked speech,
and put devious talk far from you.
²⁵ Let your eyes look directly forward,
and your gaze be straight before
you.
²⁶ Take heed to^q the path of your feet,
then all your ways will be sure.
²⁷ Do not swerve to the right or to the
left;
turn your foot away from evil.

- 5** My son, be attentive to my
wisdom,
incline your ear to my
understanding;
² that you may keep discretion,
and your lips may guard
knowledge.
³ For the lips of a loose woman drip
honey,
and her speech^r is smoother than
oil;
⁴ but in the end she is bitter as
wormwood,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps follow the path to^s
Sheol;
⁶ she does not take heed to^t the path
of life;
her ways wander, and she does
not know it.
⁷ And now, O sons, listen to me,
and do not depart from the words
of my mouth.
⁸ Keep your way far from her,
and do not go near the door of her
house;
⁹ lest you give your honor to others

- and your years to the merciless;
¹⁰ lest strangers take their fill of your
strength,^u
and your labors go to the house of
an alien;
¹¹ and at the end of your life you groan,
when your flesh and body are
consumed,
¹² and you say, "How I hated
discipline,
and my heart despised reproof!
¹³ I did not listen to the voice of my
teachers
or incline my ear to my instructors.
¹⁴ I was at the point of utter ruin
in the assembled congregation."
¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern,
flowing water from your own well.
¹⁶ Should your springs be scattered
abroad,
streams of water in the streets?
¹⁷ Let them be for yourself alone,
and not for strangers with you.
¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your
youth,
¹⁹ a lovely hind, a graceful doe.
Let her affection fill you at all times
with delight,
be infatuated always with her
love.
²⁰ Why should you be infatuated, my
son, with a loose woman
and embrace the bosom of an
adventuress?
²¹ For a man's ways are before the eyes
of the LORD,
and he watches^v all his paths.
²² The iniquities of the wicked ensnare
him,
and he is caught in the toils of his
sin.
²³ He dies for lack of discipline,
and because of his great folly he is
lost.

^q The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^r Heb *palate* ^s Heb *lay hold of*

^t The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^u Or *wealth*

^v The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

4.20-27: Remembered wisdom is a source of life, health, and personal integrity.

5.1-23: Grave warnings against sexual indulgence and an exhortation to marital faithfulness.

3: *Speech*, or "mouth"; i.e. not her words but her kisses. **4:** *Wormwood*, a bitter herb.

- 6 My son, if you have become surety
for your neighbor,
have given your pledge for a
stranger;
2 if you are snared in the utterance of
your lips,^w
caught in the words of your
mouth;
3 then do this, my son, and save
yourself,
for you have come into your
neighbor's power:
go, hasten,^x and importune your
neighbor.
4 Give your eyes no sleep
and your eyelids no slumber;
5 save yourself like a gazelle from the
hunter,^y
like a bird from the hand of the
fowler.
6 Go to the ant, O sluggard;
consider her ways, and be wise.
7 Without having any chief,
officer or ruler,
8 she prepares her food in summer,
and gathers her sustenance in
harvest.
9 How long will you lie there, O
sluggard?
When will you arise from your
sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to
rest,
11 and poverty will come upon you like
a vagabond,
and want like an armed man.
12 A worthless person, a wicked man,
goes about with crooked speech,
13 winks with his eyes, scrapes^z with
his feet,
points with his finger,
14 with perverted heart devises evil,
continually sowing discord;
15 therefore calamity will come upon
him suddenly;
in a moment he will be broken
beyond healing.
16 There are six things which the LORD
hates,
seven which are an abomination
to him:
17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent
blood,
18 a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
19 a false witness who breathes out lies,
and a man who sows discord
among brothers.
20 My son, keep your father's
commandment,
and forsake not your mother's
teaching.
21 Bind them upon your heart always;
tie them about your neck.
22 When you walk, they^a will lead you;
when you lie down, they^a will
watch over you;
and when you awake, they^a will
talk with you.
23 For the commandment is a lamp and
the teaching a light,
and the reproofs of discipline are
the way of life,
24 to preserve you from the evil
woman,
from the smooth tongue of the
adventuress.

^w Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb *the words of your mouth*^x Or *humble yourself*^y Cn: Heb *hand*^z Or *taps* ^a Heb *it*

6.1-19: Four short sections dealing with particular faults. **6.1-5:** A rash pledge could have disastrous consequences (see 2 Kg.4.1); one must not hesitate to grovel to obtain release. **3:** *Hasten*, preferably "humble yourself" (see note x) or "look disconsolate." **6-11:** The sluggard who makes no provision for future needs can learn a lesson from the ants (20.4; 30.25). Another contemptuous remark about the sluggard in 24.30-34 has the same concluding words. **12-15:** In contrast with the straightforward man (4.24-27) is the evil-minded person with his suggestive gestures. **13:** *Scrapes*, i.e. "makes signs." **16-19:** Seven bad qualities of personal character are portrayed in concrete images, in typical Hebrew manner. The progressive numerical saying (30.15-31; Am.1.3-2.8) was a rhetorical form common in Semitic poetry.

6.20-35: Further commendation of training in wisdom, with a stern warning against adultery

- ²⁵ Do not desire her beauty in your heart,
and do not let her capture you
with her eyelashes;
²⁶ for a harlot may be hired for a loaf
of bread,^b
but an adulteress^c stalks a man's
very life.
²⁷ Can a man carry fire in his bosom
and his clothes not be burned?
²⁸ Or can one walk upon hot coals
and his feet not be scorched?
²⁹ So is he who goes in to his neighbor's
wife;
none who touches her will go
unpunished.
³⁰ Do not men despise^d a thief if he
steals
to satisfy his appetite when he is
hungry?
³¹ And if he is caught, he will pay
sevenfold;
he will give all the goods of his
house.
³² He who commits adultery has no
sense;
he who does it destroys himself.
³³ Wounds and dishonor will he get,
and his disgrace will not be wiped
away.
³⁴ For jealousy makes a man furious,
and he will not spare when he
takes revenge.
³⁵ He will accept no compensation,
nor be appeased though you
multiply gifts.

- 7** My son, keep my words
and treasure up my command-
ments with you;
² keep my commandments and live,
keep my teachings as the apple of
your eye;
³ bind them on your fingers,

- write them on the tablet of your
heart.
⁴ Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call insight your intimate
friend;
⁵ to preserve you from the loose
woman,
from the adventuress with her
smooth words.
⁶ For at the window of my house
I have looked out through my
lattice,
⁷ and I have seen among the simple,
I have perceived among the
youths,
a young man without sense,
⁸ passing along the street near her
corner,
taking the road to her house
⁹ in the twilight, in the evening,
at the time of night and darkness.
¹⁰ And lo, a woman meets him,
dressed as a harlot, wily of heart.^e
¹¹ She is loud and wayward,
her feet do not stay at home;
¹² now in the street, now in the market,
and at every corner she lies in wait.
¹³ She seizes him and kisses him,
and with impudent face she says
to him:
¹⁴ "I had to offer sacrifices,
and today I have paid my vows;
¹⁵ so now I have come out to meet you,
to seek you eagerly, and I have
found you.
¹⁶ I have decked my couch with
coverings,
colored spreads of Egyptian linen;
¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,

^b Cn Compare Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *for because of a harlot to a piece of bread*

^c Heb *a man's wife* ^d Or *Men do not despise*

^e The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

(see 5.1-23). **25:** *Eyelashes*, in v. 4 "eyelids," the eyes in movement. **30-31:** A statement, not a question; *a thief if he steals* because he is hungry is not despicable, yet *he will pay a sevenfold penalty*. But an adulterer is dishonored, and *no compensation* can atone for the wrong he has done.

7.1-27: *Wisdom as a safeguard against adultery*, with some repetitions from ch. 2. **4:** Wisdom is personified as a woman, as in 1.20-33; 4.8-9; 8.1-36; 9.1-6. **14:** *Sacrifices, and . . . vows* provided the occasion for a feast with meat retained by the worshiper, since only the fat and entrails were consumed on the altar (see Lev.3.1-5 n.; 7.15; 1 Sam.9.12-13). The separation here illustrated between religion and morality is "an abomination to the LORD" (15.8; 21.3).

- aloes, and cinnamon.
- ¹⁸ Come, let us take our fill of love till morning;
let us delight ourselves with love.
- ¹⁹ For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey;
- ²⁰ he took a bag of money with him;
at full moon he will come home.”
- ²¹ With much seductive speech she persuades him;
with her smooth talk she compels him.
- ²² All at once he follows her,
as an ox goes to the slaughter,
or as a stag is caught fast^f
- ²³ till an arrow pierces its entrails;
as a bird rushes into a snare;
he does not know that it will cost him his life.
- ²⁴ And now, O sons, listen to me,
and be attentive to the words of my mouth.
- ²⁵ Let not your heart turn aside to her ways,
do not stray into her paths;
- ²⁶ for many a victim has she laid low;
yea, all her slain are a mighty host.
- ²⁷ Her house is the way to Sheol,
going down to the chambers of death.

- 8 Does not wisdom call,
does not understanding raise her voice?
- ² On the heights beside the way,
in the paths she takes her stand;
- ³ beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:
- ⁴ “To you, O men, I call,
and my cry is to the sons of men.
- ⁵ O simple ones, learn prudence;
O foolish men, pay attention.
- ⁶ Hear, for I will speak noble things,

- and from my lips will come what is right;
- ⁷ for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
- ⁸ All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.
- ⁹ They are all straight to him who understands
and right to those who find knowledge.
- ¹⁰ Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold;
- ¹¹ for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.
- ¹² I, wisdom, dwell in prudence,^g
and I find knowledge and discretion.
- ¹³ The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.
- ¹⁴ I have counsel and sound wisdom,
I have insight, I have strength.
- ¹⁵ By me kings reign,
and rulers decree what is just;
- ¹⁶ by me princes rule,
and nobles govern^h the earth.
- ¹⁷ I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.
- ¹⁸ Riches and honor are with me,
enduring wealth and prosperity.
- ¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.
- ²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
in the paths of justice,
- ²¹ endowing with wealth those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

^f Cn Compare Gk: Heb uncertain
^g Heb obscure ^h Gk: Heb all the governors of

8.1-36: Wisdom again speaks as a prophetess (compare 1.20-33), proclaiming her worth (vv. 6-11), her authority (vv. 12-16), her rewards (vv. 17-21), and her primacy in the creative work of God (vv. 22-31). 12: *Dwell in*, or “dwell with.” *Find*, or “am found through” (compare v. 35). 13: The first line is a reader’s note, not part of Wisdom’s speech. 15-16: *By me kings reign*; a divine gift of wisdom is needed by rulers to govern well, do justice, and maintain the

PROVERBS 9

Wisdom, the first of God's creations

- ²² The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,ⁱ
the first of his acts of old.
- ²³ Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
- ²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs
abounding with water.
- ²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth;
- ²⁶ before he had made the earth with its fields,^j
or the first of the dust^k of the world.
- ²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
- ²⁸ when he made firm the skies above,
when he established^l the fountains of the deep,
- ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
- ³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master workman,^l
and I was daily his^m delight,
rejoicing before him always,
- ³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the sons of men.
- ³² And now, my sons, listen to me:

- happy are those who keep my ways.
- ³³ Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it.
- ³⁴ Happy is the man who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.
- ³⁵ For he who finds me finds life
and obtains favor from the LORD;
- ³⁶ but he who misses me injures himself;
all who hate me love death.”
- 9 Wisdom has built her house,
she has set upⁿ her seven pillars.
- ² She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine,
she has also set her table.
- ³ She has sent out her maids to call from the highest places in the town,
- ⁴ “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”
To him who is without sense she says,
- ⁵ “Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
- ⁶ Leave simpleness,^o and live,
and walk in the way of insight.”
- ⁷ He who corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse,
and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury.

i Heb way

j The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

l Another reading is *little child*

m Gk: Heb lacks *his* *n* Gk Syr Tg: Heb *hewn*

o Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *simple ones*

right (1 Kg.3.9; Is.11.1-9). **22-31**: God's attribute of wisdom was shown in creation. This is a development of the thought in 3.19-20 towards the concept of a divine agent, "first-born of all creation," through whom "all things were made" (Col.1.15-16; Jn.1.1-3). **22**: *Created me*, or "came to possess me." Wisdom here is not a pre-existent divine being distinct from God, but an aspect or activity of God metaphorically endowed with speech. **23**: *Set up*, or "became a reality," or "was poured out" (like the Spirit, Acts 2.17). **27**: *Drew a circle*, the horizon. **28**: *Made firm the skies*, thought of as a solid dome resting on mountain pillars or the sea at the extremities of a round, flat earth (see Gen.1.6-8 n.; Job 26.10-11; Ps.104.2-3). **29**: Compare Gen.1.9; Job 38.10-11. **30**: *Master workman* and "little child" (see note *l*) are ancient guesses as to the meaning of a rare Hebrew word. It seems rather to mean something like a "binding force" or "living bond," linking the *inhabited world* to its Creator (compare Col.1.17).

9.1-6: A poetic allegory. Wisdom, the gracious hostess, invites the unwise to her feast. **1**: *Seven pillars* supporting the roof suggest the banquetting hall of a palatial residence. Wisdom's house (see 8.34) is the world, and the pillars are the "pillars of heaven" (see 8.28 n.; Job 26.11).

9.7-12: Maxims on scoffers and wise men. **7**: A *scoffer* is filled with arrogant self-assurance

- ⁸ Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
- ⁹ Give instruction^p to a wise man, and he will be still wiser;
teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.
- ¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
- ¹¹ For by me your days will be multiplied,
and years will be added to your life.
- ¹² If you are wise, you are wise for yourself;
if you scoff, you alone will bear it.
- ¹³ A foolish woman is noisy;
she is wanton^q and knows no shame.^r
- ¹⁴ She sits at the door of her house,
she takes a seat on the high places of the town,
¹⁵ calling to those who pass by,
who are going straight on their way,
- ¹⁶ "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"
And to him who is without sense she says,
- ¹⁷ "Stolen water is sweet,
and bread eaten in secret is pleasant."^s
- ¹⁸ But he does not know that the dead^s are there,

that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

10 The proverbs of Solomon.

- A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.
- ² Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit,
but righteousness delivers from death.
- ³ The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry,
but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.
- ⁴ A slack hand causes poverty,
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- ⁵ A son who gathers in summer is prudent,
but a son who sleeps in harvest brings shame.
- ⁶ Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- ⁷ The memory of the righteous is a blessing,
but the name of the wicked will rot.
- ⁸ The wise of heart will heed commandments,
but a prating fool will come to ruin.

^p Heb lacks instruction

^q Cn Compare Syr Vg: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^r Gk Syr: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^s Heb shades

and feels no need of learning or religion (21.24). **10:** The theme of 1.7 is repeated as the teacher's discourses in chs. 1-9 draw to a close. **11:** A displaced verse which fits after 8.17. **12:** *You are wise for yourself*, or, "wisdom is yours." Responsibility for his wisdom or folly rests with every man.

9.13-18: Folly, in contrast to the lady Wisdom (vv. 1-6), is a harlot leading man to death; she is loud-mouthed, stupid, and without shame. **17:** A popular proverb applied to adultery. **18:** 5.23; 7.26-27.

10.1-22.16: Book II, a collection of miscellaneous maxims, each being two lines in parallelism. By sage observations on life and behavior, vices are held up to scorn, while virtues are commended as based on common sense, intelligence and obedience to God. Punishment of vice and reward of virtue can be observed in experience. The individual maxims and observations would serve as texts for instruction in a home or school of wisdom. **10.1:** *The proverbs of Solomon*, see Introduction.

10.2: *Delivers from death*, i.e. is rewarded by long life. An early death was regarded as punishment for sin. **3:** An affirmation based more on faith than on experience.

- ⁹ He who walks in integrity walks securely,
but he who perverts his ways will be found out.
- ¹⁰ He who winks the eye causes trouble,
but he who boldly reproves makes peace.^t
- ¹¹ The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- ¹² Hatred stirs up strife,
but love covers all offenses.
- ¹³ On the lips of him who has understanding wisdom is found,
but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.
- ¹⁴ Wise men lay up knowledge,
but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near.
- ¹⁵ A rich man's wealth is his strong city;
the poverty of the poor is their ruin.
- ¹⁶ The wage of the righteous leads to life,
the gain of the wicked to sin.
- ¹⁷ He who heeds instruction is on the path to life,
but he who rejects reproof goes astray.
- ¹⁸ He who conceals hatred has lying lips,
and he who utters slander is a fool.
- ¹⁹ When words are many, transgression is not lacking,
but he who restrains his lips is prudent.
- ²⁰ The tongue of the righteous is choice silver;
the mind of the wicked is of little worth.
- ²¹ The lips of the righteous feed many,
but fools die for lack of sense.
- ²² The blessing of the LORD makes rich,
and he adds no sorrow with it.^u
- ²³ It is like sport to a fool to do wrong,
- but wise conduct is pleasure to a man of understanding.
- ²⁴ What the wicked dreads will come upon him,
but the desire of the righteous will be granted.
- ²⁵ When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more,
but the righteous is established for ever.
- ²⁶ Like vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes,
so is the sluggard to those who send him.
- ²⁷ The fear of the LORD prolongs life,
but the years of the wicked will be short.
- ²⁸ The hope of the righteous ends in gladness,
but the expectation of the wicked comes to nought.
- ²⁹ The LORD is a stronghold to him whose way is upright,
but destruction to evildoers.
- ³⁰ The righteous will never be removed,
but the wicked will not dwell in the land.
- ³¹ The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
but the perverse tongue will be cut off.
- ³² The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,
but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse.
- ||| A false balance is an abomination to the LORD,
but a just weight is his delight.
- ² When pride comes, then comes disgrace;
but with the humble is wisdom.
- ³ The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.

^t Gk: Heb *but a prating fool will come to ruin*
^u Or *and toil adds nothing to it*

16: *The wage of the righteous*, or "what the righteous does." *Sin*, or "destruction," compare Rom.6.23, which may be derived from this verse. **19:** It is better to say little than too much. **22:** See note *u*; not painful toil but God's blessing brings wealth.

11.1: Compare Dt.25.13–16. **6:** *Lust*, or "craving," as in 10.3.

- ⁴ Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
but righteousness delivers from death.
- ⁵ The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight,
but the wicked falls by his own wickedness.
- ⁶ The righteousness of the upright delivers them,
but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust.
- ⁷ When the wicked dies, his hope perishes,
and the expectation of the godless comes to nought.
- ⁸ The righteous is delivered from trouble,
and the wicked gets into it instead.
- ⁹ With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor,
but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.
- ¹⁰ When it goes well with the righteous,
the city rejoices;
and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness.
- ¹¹ By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.
- ¹² He who belittles his neighbor lacks sense,
but a man of understanding remains silent.
- ¹³ He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,
but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing hidden.
- ¹⁴ Where there is no guidance, a people falls;
but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.
- ¹⁵ He who gives surety for a stranger will smart for it,
but he who hates suretyship is secure.
- ¹⁶ A gracious woman gets honor,
and violent men get riches.
- ¹⁷ A man who is kind benefits himself,
but a cruel man hurts himself.
- ¹⁸ A wicked man earns deceptive wages,
but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward.
- ¹⁹ He who is steadfast in righteousness will live,
but he who pursues evil will die.
- ²⁰ Men of perverse mind are an abomination to the LORD,
but those of blameless ways are his delight.
- ²¹ Be assured, an evil man will not go unpunished,
but those who are righteous will be delivered.
- ²² Like a gold ring in a swine's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.
- ²³ The desire of the righteous ends only in good;
the expectation of the wicked in wrath.
- ²⁴ One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer;
another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.
- ²⁵ A liberal man will be enriched,
and one who waters will himself be watered.
- ²⁶ The people curse him who holds back grain,
but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.
- ²⁷ He who diligently seeks good seeks favor,
but evil comes to him who searches for it.
- ²⁸ He who trusts in his riches will wither,^v
but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.
- ²⁹ He who troubles his household will inherit wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise.

^v Cn: Heb *fall*

13: *Secrets*, i.e. confidences. **15:** *Hates suretyship*, or "is loathe to make pledges for others."
16: *Violent*, or "vigorous." **18:** *Deceptive*, illusory, (1.17–19). **25:** *Who waters* when water is precious. **26:** *Holds back* for higher prices. **27:** *Seeks favor*, see Am.5.4,14. **30:** *Of the righteous*, or "of righteousness." *Is* (like the fruit of) *a tree of life*, 3.18; Gen.3.22.

- ³⁰ The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
but lawlessness^w takes away lives.
- ³¹ If the righteous is requited on earth,
how much more the wicked and the sinner!
- 12** Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates reproof is stupid.
- ² A good man obtains favor from the LORD,
but a man of evil devices he condemns.
- ³ A man is not established by wickedness,
but the root of the righteous will never be moved.
- ⁴ A good wife is the crown of her husband,
but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.
- ⁵ The thoughts of the righteous are just;
the counsels of the wicked are treacherous.
- ⁶ The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,
but the mouth of the upright delivers men.
- ⁷ The wicked are overthrown and are no more,
but the house of the righteous will stand.
- ⁸ A man is commended according to his good sense,
but one of perverse mind is despised.
- ⁹ Better is a man of humble standing who works for himself
than one who plays the great man but lacks bread.
- ¹⁰ A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast,
but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.
- ¹¹ He who tills his land will have plenty of bread,
but he who follows worthless pursuits has no sense.

- ¹² The strong tower of the wicked comes to ruin,
but the root of the righteous stands firm.^x
- ¹³ An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips,
but the righteous escapes from trouble.
- ¹⁴ From the fruit of his words a man is satisfied with good,
and the work of a man's hand comes back to him.
- ¹⁵ The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice.
- ¹⁶ The vexation of a fool is known at once,
but the prudent man ignores an insult.
- ¹⁷ He who speaks the truth gives honest evidence,
but a false witness utters deceit.
- ¹⁸ There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- ¹⁹ Truthful lips endure for ever,
but a lying tongue is but for a moment.
- ²⁰ Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
but those who plan good have joy.
- ²¹ No ill befalls the righteous,
but the wicked are filled with trouble.
- ²² Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD,
but those who act faithfully are his delight.
- ²³ A prudent man conceals his knowledge,
but fools^y proclaim their folly.
- ²⁴ The hand of the diligent will rule,
while the slothful will be put to forced labor.
- ²⁵ Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down,
but a good word makes him glad.

^w Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb *a wise man*
^x Cn: The Hebrew of verse 12 is obscure
^y Heb *the heart of fools*

12.1: There is no short-cut to knowledge. **3:** The invisible *root* holds the tree firm (Hos.14.5-6). **6:** Bad men talk of violence but good men of rescue. **10:** What passes for *mercy* with the

²⁶ A righteous man turns away from evil,^z
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

²⁷ A slothful man will not catch his prey,^a
but the diligent man will get precious wealth.^b

²⁸ In the path of righteousness is life,
but the way of error leads to death.^c

13 A wise son hears his father's instruction,
but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

² From the fruit of his mouth a good man eats good,
but the desire of the treacherous is for violence.

³ He who guards his mouth preserves his life;
he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

⁴ The soul of the sluggard craves, and gets nothing,
while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.

⁵ A righteous man hates falsehood,
but a wicked man acts shamefully and disgracefully.

⁶ Righteousness guards him whose way is upright,
but sin overthrows the wicked.

⁷ One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing;
another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.

⁸ The ransom of a man's life is his wealth,
but a poor man has no means of redemption.^d

⁹ The light of the righteous rejoices,
but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

¹⁰ By insolence the heedless make strife,

but with those who take advice is wisdom.

¹¹ Wealth hastily gotten^e will dwindle,
but he who gathers little by little will increase it.

¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

¹³ He who despises the word brings destruction on himself,
but he who respects the commandment will be rewarded.

¹⁴ The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
that one may avoid the snares of death.

¹⁵ Good sense wins favor,
but the way of the faithless is their ruin.^f

¹⁶ In everything a prudent man acts with knowledge,
but a fool flaunts his folly.

¹⁷ A bad messenger plunges men into trouble,
but a faithful envoy brings healing.

¹⁸ Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction,
but he who heeds reproof is honored.

¹⁹ A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul;
but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

²⁰ He who walks with wise men becomes wise,
but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

²¹ Misfortune pursues sinners,
but prosperity rewards the righteous.

²² A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,

^z Cn: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain
^a Cn Compare Gk Syr: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^b Cn: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^c Cn: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^d Cn: Heb does not hear rebuke

^e Gk Vg: Heb from vanity

^f Cn Compare Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb is enduring

wicked is cruel. **26:** Turns away from evil, or "survives his trouble," in contrast to the wicked who ends in trouble. **27a:** This means something like "the indolent is not worth his salt."

13.2: Good words bring good results (see 12.14). **4:** Soul, or "desire." **9:** Light is a symbol of life (1 Kg.15.4; Jn.1.4). Rejoices, or "is joy." **12:** See 3.18 n. **13:** The word of warning. **17:** Healing, or "benefit." **19:** Disconnected lines from different proverbs. **23:** This may mean "a lawsuit devours the poor man's land, and his home is swept away when there is no justice."

- but the sinner's wealth is laid up
for the righteous.
- ²³ The fallow ground of the poor yields
much food,
but it is swept away through
injustice.
- ²⁴ He who spares the rod hates his son,
but he who loves him is diligent
to discipline him.
- ²⁵ The righteous has enough to satisfy
his appetite,
but the belly of the wicked suffers
want.
- 14** Wisdom^g builds her house,
but folly with her own hands
tears it down.
- ² He who walks in uprightness fears
the LORD,
but he who is devious in his ways
despises him.
- ³ The talk of a fool is a rod for his
back,^h
but the lips of the wise will
preserve them.
- ⁴ Where there are no oxen, there is
noⁱ grain;
but abundant crops come by the
strength of the ox.
- ⁵ A faithful witness does not lie,
but a false witness breathes out
lies.
- ⁶ A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain,
but knowledge is easy for a man
of understanding.
- ⁷ Leave the presence of a fool,
for there you do not meet words
of knowledge.
- ⁸ The wisdom of a prudent man is to
discern his way,
but the folly of fools is deceiving.
- ⁹ God scorns the wicked,^j
but the upright enjoy his favor.
- ¹⁰ The heart knows its own bitterness,
and no stranger shares its joy.
- ¹¹ The house of the wicked will be
destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will
flourish.
- ¹² There is a way which seems right to
a man,

- but its end is the way to death.^k
- ¹³ Even in laughter the heart is sad,
and the end of joy is grief.
- ¹⁴ A perverse man will be filled with
the fruit of his ways,
and a good man with the fruit of
his deeds.^l
- ¹⁵ The simple believes everything,
but the prudent looks where he
is going.
- ¹⁶ A wise man is cautious and turns
away from evil,
but a fool throws off restraint and
is careless.
- ¹⁷ A man of quick temper acts
foolishly,
but a man of discretion is
patient.^m
- ¹⁸ The simple acquire folly,
but the prudent are crowned with
knowledge.
- ¹⁹ The evil bow down before the good,
the wicked at the gates of the
righteous.
- ²⁰ The poor is disliked even by his
neighbor,
but the rich has many friends.
- ²¹ He who despises his neighbor is a
sinner,
but happy is he who is kind to
the poor.
- ²² Do they not err that devise evil?
Those who devise good meet
loyalty and faithfulness.
- ²³ In all toil there is profit,
but mere talk tends only to want.
- ²⁴ The crown of the wise is their
wisdom,ⁿ
but folly is the garland^o of fools.
- ²⁵ A truthful witness saves lives,
but one who utters lies is a
betrayer.
- ²⁶ In the fear of the LORD one has
strong confidence,
and his children will have a
refuge.

^g Heb Wisdom of women

^h Cn: Heb a rod of pride

ⁱ Cn: Heb a manger of

^k Heb ways of death

^l Cn: Heb from upon him

^m Gk: Heb is hated

ⁿ Cn Compare Gk: Heb riches

^j Cn: Heb obscure

^o Cn: Heb from upon him

^p Cn: Heb from upon him

^q Cn: Heb from upon him

^r Cn: Heb from upon him

14.1: The house of life. **3:** Is a rod for, brings a switch on. **9:** Possibly should be read, "Guilt dwells with fools, but favor among the upright." **12:** What seems a clear road leads to death.

²⁷ The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
that one may avoid the snares of death.

²⁸ In a multitude of people is the glory of a king,
but without people a prince is ruined.

²⁹ He who is slow to anger has great understanding,
but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

³⁰ A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh,
but passion makes the bones rot.

³¹ He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker,
but he who is kind to the needy honors him.

³² The wicked is overthrown through his evil-doing,
but the righteous finds refuge through his integrity.^p

³³ Wisdom abides in the mind of a man of understanding,
but it is not^q known in the heart of fools.

³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people.

³⁵ A servant who deals wisely has the king's favor,
but his wrath falls on one who acts shamefully.

15 A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

² The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge,^r
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

³ The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
keeping watch on the evil and the good.

⁴ A gentle tongue is a tree of life,
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

⁵ A fool despises his father's instruction,

but he who heeds admonition is prudent.

⁶ In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.

⁷ The lips of the wise spread knowledge;
not so the minds of fools.

⁸ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

⁹ The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but he loves him who pursues righteousness.

¹⁰ There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way;
he who hates reproof will die.

¹¹ Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD,
how much more the hearts of men!

¹² A scoffer does not like to be reproved;
he will not go to the wise.

¹³ A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance,
but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.

¹⁴ The mind of him who has understanding seeks knowledge,
but the mouths of fools feed on folly.

¹⁵ All the days of the afflicted are evil;
but a cheerful heart has a continual feast.

¹⁶ Better is a little with the fear of the LORD
than great treasure and trouble with it.

¹⁷ Better is a dinner of herbs where love is
than a fatted ox and hatred with it.

¹⁸ A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,

^p Gk Syr: Heb in his death

^q Gk Syr: Heb lacks not

^r Cn: Heb makes knowledge good

30: A healthy mind makes a vigorous body, and vice versa. **31:** His (i.e. the poor man's) Maker.

15:8: Sacrifice and prayer connote worship, for which sincerity is essential (Is.1.10-17). **11:** Sheol and Abaddon, the place and state (destruction) of the dead (see Gen.37.35 n.). **15:** Evil, bad, unhappy. **16:** Trouble, uneasiness.

- but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.
- ¹⁹ The way of a sluggard is overgrown with thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.
- ²⁰ A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.
- ²¹ Folly is a joy to him who has no sense, but a man of understanding walks aright.
- ²² Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed.
- ²³ To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!
- ²⁴ The wise man's path leads upward to life, that he may avoid Sheol beneath.
- ²⁵ The LORD tears down the house of the proud, but maintains the widow's boundaries.
- ²⁶ The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, the words of the pure are pleasing to him.^s
- ²⁷ He who is greedy for unjust gain makes trouble for his household, but he who hates bribes will live.
- ²⁸ The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.
- ²⁹ The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.
- ³⁰ The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones.
- ³¹ He whose ear heeds wholesome admonition will abide among the wise.
- ³² He who ignores instruction despises himself, but he who heeds admonition gains understanding.
- ³³ The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility goes before honor.
- 16** The plans of the mind belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.
- ² All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit.
- ³ Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.
- ⁴ The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.
- ⁵ Every one who is arrogant is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.
- ⁶ By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.
- ⁷ When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.
- ⁸ Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.
- ⁹ A man's mind plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.
- ¹⁰ Inspired decisions are on the lips of a king; his mouth does not sin in judgment.
- ¹¹ A just balance and scales are the LORD'S; all the weights in the bag are his work.

^s Cf. Compare Gk: Heb pleasant words are pure
^t Heb makes fat

24: Upward, away from Sheol, the grave. **30:** A light shines in the eyes of the messenger with good news. **33:** Instruction in, or "the foundation of." Humility here means humility before God (Mic.6.8).

16.1: To be able to express thought in speech is a gift of God; see v. 9. **2:** Weighs the spirit which moves a man. **4:** The will of God determines the doom of evil men. **6:** Iniquity is atoned for by goodness which implies repentance. **10:** Sin, err. **11:** Commercial honesty is a divine

- ¹² It is an abomination to kings to do evil,
for the throne is established by righteousness.
- ¹³ Righteous lips are the delight of a king,
and he loves him who speaks what is right.
- ¹⁴ A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
and a wise man will appease it.
- ¹⁵ In the light of a king's face there is life,
and his favor is like the clouds that bring the spring rain.
- ¹⁶ To get wisdom is better^u than gold;
to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.
- ¹⁷ The highway of the upright turns aside from evil;
he who guards his way preserves his life.
- ¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- ¹⁹ It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor
than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- ²⁰ He who gives heed to the word will prosper,
and happy is he who trusts in the LORD.
- ²¹ The wise of heart is called a man of discernment,
and pleasant speech increases persuasiveness.
- ²² Wisdom is a fountain of life to him who has it,
but folly is the chastisement of fools.
- ²³ The mind of the wise makes his speech judicious,
and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- ²⁴ Pleasant words are like a honeycomb,
sweetness to the soul and health to the body.
- ²⁵ There is a way which seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.^v
- ²⁶ A worker's appetite works for him;
his mouth urges him on.
- ²⁷ A worthless man plots evil,
and his speech is like a scorching fire.
- ²⁸ A perverse man spreads strife,
and a whisperer separates close friends.
- ²⁹ A man of violence entices his neighbor
and leads him in a way that is not good.
- ³⁰ He who winks his eyes plans^w perverse things,
he who compresses his lips brings evil to pass.
- ³¹ A hoary head is a crown of glory;
it is gained in a righteous life.
- ³² He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
- ³³ The lot is cast into the lap,
but the decision is wholly from the LORD.
- 17** Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.
- ² A slave who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully,
and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.
- ³ The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold,
and the LORD tries hearts.
- ⁴ An evildoer listens to wicked lips;
and a liar gives heed to a mischievous tongue.
- ⁵ He who mocks the poor insults his Maker;
he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.
- ⁶ Grandchildren are the crown of the aged,
and the glory of sons is their fathers.
- ⁷ Fine speech is not becoming to a fool;

^u Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *how much better*
^v Heb *ways of death*
^w Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *to plan*

command (11.1; Ezek.45.10). **20:** *The word*, the commandment. **25:** 14.12. **31:** *Glory*, or "beauty"; compare 1 Kg.3.14. **33:** The fall of *the lot* is not by chance but by God's will.

- still less is false speech to a prince.
⁸ A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of him who gives it; wherever he turns he prospers.
⁹ He who forgives an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter alienates a friend.
¹⁰ A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.
¹¹ An evil man seeks only rebellion, and a cruel messenger will be sent against him.
¹² Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs, rather than a fool in his folly.
¹³ If a man returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.
¹⁴ The beginning of strife is like letting out water; so quit before the quarrel breaks out.
¹⁵ He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
¹⁶ Why should a fool have a price in his hand to buy wisdom, when he has no mind?
¹⁷ A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
¹⁸ A man without sense gives a pledge, and becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor.
¹⁹ He who loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction.
²⁰ A man of crooked mind does not prosper, and one with a perverse tongue falls into calamity.
²¹ A stupid son is a grief to a father; and the father of a fool has no joy.
²² A cheerful heart is a good medicine,

- but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.
²³ A wicked man accepts a bribe from the bosom to pervert the ways of justice.
²⁴ A man of understanding sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
²⁵ A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.
²⁶ To impose a fine on a righteous man is not good; to flog noble men is wrong.
²⁷ He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.
²⁸ Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.
18 He who is estranged^x seeks pretexts^y to break out against all sound judgment.
² A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.
³ When wickedness comes, contempt comes also; and with dishonor comes disgrace.
⁴ The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a gushing stream.
⁵ It is not good to be partial to a wicked man, or to deprive a righteous man of justice.
⁶ A fool's lips bring strife, and his mouth invites a flogging.
⁷ A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to himself.

^x Heb separated
^y Gk Vg: Heb desire

17.8: *A magic stone*, a charm to bring good luck. **9:** *Repeats*, harps on. **11:** Rebellion provokes severity. **14:** *Letting out water* from a dam or irrigation channel is easier to start than to stop. **17:** *Is born for*, to help in adversity is what a brother is for. **18:** See 6.1–5 n. **19:** *Makes his door high* so that a visitor must go up to meet him; a figure of arrogance. **23:** *From the bosom*, concealed. **24:** A wise man concentrates on the immediate goal.

18.1: A friend who has been alienated is hostile. **4:** *Deep waters* are unfathomable or danger-

- ⁸ The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.
- ⁹ He who is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.
- ¹⁰ The name of the LORD is a strong tower;
the righteous man runs into it and is safe.
- ¹¹ A rich man's wealth is his strong city,
and like a high wall protecting him.^z
- ¹² Before destruction a man's heart is haughty,
but humility goes before honor.
- ¹³ If one gives answer before he hears,
it is his folly and shame.
- ¹⁴ A man's spirit will endure sickness;
but a broken spirit who can bear?
- ¹⁵ An intelligent mind acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
- ¹⁶ A man's gift makes room for him
and brings him before great men.
- ¹⁷ He who states his case first seems right,
until the other comes and examines him.
- ¹⁸ The lot puts an end to disputes
and decides between powerful contenders.
- ¹⁹ A brother helped is like a strong city,^a
but quarreling is like the bars of a castle.
- ²⁰ From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied;
he is satisfied by the yield of his lips.
- ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruits.
- ²² He who finds a wife finds a good thing,
and obtains favor from the LORD.
- ²³ The poor use entreaties,
but the rich answer roughly.
- ²⁴ There are^b friends who pretend to be friends,^c
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- 19** Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity
than a man who is perverse in speech, and is a fool.
- ² It is not good for a man to be without knowledge,
and he who makes haste with his feet misses his way.
- ³ When a man's folly brings his way to ruin,
his heart rages against the LORD.
- ⁴ Wealth brings many new friends,
but a poor man is deserted by his friend.
- ⁵ A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who utters lies will not escape.
- ⁶ Many seek the favor of a generous man,
and every one is a friend to a man who gives gifts.
- ⁷ All a poor man's brothers hate him;
how much more do his friends go far from him!
He pursues them with words, but does not have them.^d
- ⁸ He who gets wisdom loves himself;
he who keeps understanding will prosper.
- ⁹ A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who utters lies will perish.
- ¹⁰ It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury,
much less for a slave to rule over princes.
- ¹¹ Good sense makes a man slow to anger,

^z Or in his imagination^a Gk Syr Vg Tg: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain^b Syr Tg: Heb A man of^c Cn Compare Syr Vg Tg: Heb to be broken^d Heb uncertain

ous (10.19), a gushing stream refreshes. **8:** Slander listened to is not soon forgotten. **17:** A figure from the law courts. **18:** 16.33. **19:** The Hebrew may mean "burning anger" rather than a brother helped; i.e. anger is hard to overcome. **20:** See 13.2 n. **19.7c:** When he pursues them they speak angrily to him.

- and it is his glory to overlook an offense.
- ¹² A king's wrath is like the growling of a lion,
but his favor is like dew upon the grass.
- ¹³ A foolish son is ruin to his father,
and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain.
- ¹⁴ House and wealth are inherited from fathers,
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.
- ¹⁵ Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep,
and an idle person will suffer hunger.
- ¹⁶ He who keeps the commandment keeps his life;
he who despises the word^e will die.
- ¹⁷ He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will repay him for his deed.
- ¹⁸ Discipline your son while there is hope;
do not set your heart on his destruction.
- ¹⁹ A man of great wrath will pay the penalty;
for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again.^f
- ²⁰ Listen to advice and accept instruction,
that you may gain wisdom for the future.
- ²¹ Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established.
- ²² What is desired in a man is loyalty,
and a poor man is better than a liar.
- ²³ The fear of the LORD leads to life;
and he who has it rests satisfied;
he will not be visited by harm.
- ²⁴ The sluggard buries his hand in the dish,
and will not even bring it back to his mouth.
- ²⁵ Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence;
reprove a man of understanding,

- and he will gain knowledge.
- ²⁶ He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who causes shame and brings reproach.
- ²⁷ Cease, my son, to hear instruction only to stray from the words of knowledge.
- ²⁸ A worthless witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.
- ²⁹ Condemnation is ready for scoffers, and flogging for the backs of fools.
- 20** Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler;
and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.
- ² The dread wrath of a king is like the growling of a lion;
he who provokes him to anger forfeits his life.
- ³ It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife;
but every fool will be quarreling.
- ⁴ The sluggard does not plow in the autumn;
he will seek at harvest and have nothing.
- ⁵ The purpose in a man's mind is like deep water,
but a man of understanding will draw it out.
- ⁶ Many a man proclaims his own loyalty,
but a faithful man who can find?
- ⁷ A righteous man who walks in his integrity—
blessed are his sons after him!
- ⁸ A king who sits on the throne of judgment
winnows all evil with his eyes.
- ⁹ Who can say, "I have made my heart clean;
I am pure from my sin"? ^f
- ¹⁰ Diverse weights and diverse measures
are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
- ¹¹ Even a child makes himself known by his acts,

^e Cf. Compare 13.13: Heb *his ways* ^f Heb *obscure*

- whether what he does is pure and right.
- ¹² The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made them both.
- ¹³ Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty;
open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread.
- ¹⁴ "It is bad, it is bad," says the buyer;
but when he goes away, then he boasts.
- ¹⁵ There is gold, and abundance of costly stones;
but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.
- ¹⁶ Take a man's garment when he has given surety for a stranger,
and hold him in pledge when he gives surety for foreigners.
- ¹⁷ Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man,
but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.
- ¹⁸ Plans are established by counsel;
by wise guidance wage war.
- ¹⁹ He who goes about gossiping reveals secrets;
therefore do not associate with one who speaks foolishly.
- ²⁰ If one curses his father or his mother,
his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.
- ²¹ An inheritance gotten hastily in the beginning
will in the end not be blessed.
- ²² Do not say, "I will repay evil";
wait for the LORD, and he will help you.
- ²³ Diverse weights are an abomination to the LORD,
and false scales are not good.
- ²⁴ A man's steps are ordered by the LORD;
how then can man understand his way?
- ²⁵ It is a snare for a man to say rashly, "It is holy,"
and to reflect only after making his vows.
- ²⁶ A wise king winnows the wicked,
and drives the wheel over them.
- ²⁷ The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD,
searching all his innermost parts.
- ²⁸ Loyalty and faithfulness preserve the king,
and his throne is upheld by righteousness.^g
- ²⁹ The glory of young men is their strength,
but the beauty of old men is their gray hair.
- ³⁰ Blows that wound cleanse away evil;
strokes make clean the innermost parts.
- 21** The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.
- ² Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,
but the LORD weighs the heart.
- ³ To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.
- ⁴ Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.
- ⁵ The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance,
but every one who is hasty comes only to want.
- ⁶ The getting of treasures by a lying tongue
is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.
- ⁷ The violence of the wicked will sweep them away,
because they refuse to do what is just.
- ⁸ The way of the guilty is crooked,
but the conduct of the pure is right.
- ⁹ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop

^g Gk: Heb *loyalty*

claims of evil men. **12:** The Creator of the ear and eye himself hears and sees. **16:** Nearly identical with 27.13. See 6.1–5 n. **20:** See 13.9 n. **22:** Rom.12.19. **25:** On vows see Lev. ch. 27. **26:** *Drives the wheel*, requites their guilt. **27:** *The spirit of man* is the divine element in man, "the breath of life" (Gen.2.7), his moral consciousness.

21.1: *The king* gives favors on behalf of God. **3:** Hos.6.6. **4:** For *lamp* read "fruit," compare

- than in a house shared with a contentious woman.
- ¹⁰ The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no mercy in his eyes.
- ¹¹ When a scoffer is punished, the simple becomes wise; when a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge.
- ¹² The righteous observes the house of the wicked; the wicked are cast down to ruin.
- ¹³ He who closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself cry out and not be heard.
- ¹⁴ A gift in secret averts anger; and a bribe in the bosom, strong wrath.
- ¹⁵ When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous, but dismay to evildoers.
- ¹⁶ A man who wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead.
- ¹⁷ He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.
- ¹⁸ The wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the faithless for the upright.
- ¹⁹ It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and fretful woman.
- ²⁰ Precious treasure remains^h in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it.
- ²¹ He who pursues righteousness and kindness will find lifeⁱ and honor.
- ²² A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust.
- ²³ He who keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.
- ²⁴ "Scoffer" is the name of the proud, haughty man
- who acts with arrogant pride.
- ²⁵ The desire of the sluggard kills him for his hands refuse to labor.
- ²⁶ All day long the wicked covets,^j but the righteous gives and does not hold back.
- ²⁷ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with evil intent.
- ²⁸ A false witness will perish, but the word of a man who hears will endure.
- ²⁹ A wicked man puts on a bold face, but an upright man considers^k his ways.
- ³⁰ No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel, can avail against the LORD.
- ³¹ The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.
- 22** A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.
- ² The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the maker of them all.
- ³ A prudent man sees danger and hides himself; but the simple go on, and suffer for it.
- ⁴ The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.
- ⁵ Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; he who guards himself will keep far from them.
- ⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.
- ⁷ The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.
- ⁸ He who sows injustice will reap calamity,

^h Gk: Heb and oil ⁱ Gk: Heb life and righteousness
^j Gk: Heb all day long he covets covetously
^k Another reading is establishes

11.30. 18: A ransom, because his punishment is a warning to others. 31: Compare Ps.20.7.
 22.8: The rod of punishment will destroy the results of his work.

- and the rod of his fury will fail.
⁹ He who has a bountiful eye will be blessed,
 for he shares his bread with the poor.
¹⁰ Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out,
 and quarreling and abuse will cease.
¹¹ He who loves purity of heart,
 and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.
¹² The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge,
 but he overthrows the words of the faithless.
¹³ The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!
 I shall be slain in the streets!"
¹⁴ The mouth of a loose woman is a deep pit;
 he with whom the LORD is angry will fall into it.
¹⁵ Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,
 but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.
¹⁶ He who oppresses the poor to increase his own wealth,
 or gives to the rich, will only come to want.
¹⁷ Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise,
 and apply your mind to my knowledge;
¹⁸ for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
 if all of them are ready on your lips.
¹⁹ That your trust may be in the LORD,
 I have made them known to you today, even to you.
- ²⁰ Have I not written for you thirty sayings
 of admonition and knowledge,
²¹ to show you what is right and true,
 that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?
²² Do not rob the poor, because he is poor,
 or crush the afflicted at the gate;
²³ for the LORD will plead their cause
 and despoil of life those who despoil them.
²⁴ Make no friendship with a man given to anger,
 nor go with a wrathful man,
²⁵ lest you learn his ways
 and entangle yourself in a snare.
²⁶ Be not one of those who give pledges,
 who become surety for debts.
²⁷ If you have nothing with which to pay,
 why should your bed be taken from under you?
²⁸ Remove not the ancient landmark
 which your fathers have set.
²⁹ Do you see a man skilful in his work?
 he will stand before kings;
 he will not stand before obscure men.
- 23** When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
 observe carefully what¹ is before you;
² and put a knife to your throat
 if you are a man given to appetite.
³ Do not desire his delicacies,
 for they are deceptive food.
⁴ Do not toil to acquire wealth;
 be wise enough to desist.
⁵ When your eyes light upon it, it is gone;

¹ Or who

22.17–24.22: Book III, a teacher's admonitions to his pupil ("son") in training for responsibility, with introduction (22.17–21) and conclusion (24.21–22). The Egyptian "Instruction of Amen-em-ope" (see Introduction) also has thirty sections (22.20), of which ten have parallels here.

22.17: *The words of the wise*, the title of the section (compare 24.23) has been included by mistake in the first line. **21:** *Sent*, or "asked." **22:** *At the gate* of a city the elders gave judgment in disputes (Am.5.10–15). **28:** As in Amen-em-ope, vi, "Do not carry off the landmark" (compare 23.10; Dt.19.14).

23.1–2: *What is before you*, or "in whose company you are"; the man of lower rank must remember his manners. **4–5:** Amen-em-ope, vii, "Riches . . . have made themselves wings like

- for suddenly it takes to itself wings,
flying like an eagle toward heaven.
- ⁶ Do not eat the bread of a man who
is stingy;
do not desire his delicacies;
- ⁷ for he is like one who is inwardly
reckoning.^m
“Eat and drink!” he says to you;
but his heart is not with you.
- ⁸ You will vomit up the morsels
which you have eaten,
and waste your pleasant words.
- ⁹ Do not speak in the hearing of a
fool,
for he will despise the wisdom of
your words.
- ¹⁰ Do not remove an ancient landmark
or enter the fields of the fatherless;
- ¹¹ for their Redeemer is strong;
he will plead their cause against
you.
- ¹² Apply your mind to instruction
and your ear to words of
knowledge.
- ¹³ Do not withhold discipline from a
child;
if you beat him with a rod, he will
not die.
- ¹⁴ If you beat him with the rod
you will save his life from Sheol.
- ¹⁵ My son, if your heart is wise,
my heart too will be glad.
- ¹⁶ My soul will rejoice
when your lips speak what is right.
- ¹⁷ Let not your heart envy sinners,
but continue in the fear of the
LORD all the day.
- ¹⁸ Surely there is a future,
and your hope will not be cut
off.
- ¹⁹ Hear, my son, and be wise,
and direct your mind in the way.
- ²⁰ Be not among winebibbers,
or among gluttonous eaters of
meat;
- ²¹ for the drunkard and the glutton
will come to poverty,
and drowsiness will clothe a man
with rags.
- ²² Hearken to your father who begot
you,
and do not despise your mother
when she is old.
- ²³ Buy truth, and do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and
understanding.
- ²⁴ The father of the righteous will
greatly rejoice;
he who begets a wise son will be
glad in him.
- ²⁵ Let your father and mother be glad,
let her who bore you rejoice.
- ²⁶ My son, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observeⁿ my
ways.
- ²⁷ For a harlot is a deep pit;
an adventuress is a narrow well.
- ²⁸ She lies in wait like a robber
and increases the faithless among
men.
- ²⁹ Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has
complaining?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
- ³⁰ Those who tarry long over wine,
those who go to try mixed wine.
- ³¹ Do not look at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.
- ³² At the last it bites like a serpent,
and stings like an adder.
- ³³ Your eyes will see strange things,
and your mind utter perverse
things.
- ³⁴ You will be like one who lies down
in the midst of the sea,
like one who lies on the top of a
mast.^o
- ³⁵ “They struck me,” you will say,^p
“but I was not hurt;
- m Heb obscure n Another reading is *delight in*
o Heb obscure
p Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb lacks *you will say*

geese.” ⁶: To be completed from v. 3. ⁷: *Like . . . reckoning*, or “as if a storm were within him.”
¹⁸: *Surely there is*, or “then you will have . . .” ³⁴: *In the midst of the sea*, not in the water but
“far out at sea.” *On top of the mast* cannot be right; perhaps read “will roll from side to side
like the top of a mast.”

- they beat me, but I did not feel it.
When shall I awake?
I will seek another drink.”
- 24** Be not envious of evil men,
nor desire to be with them;
² for their minds devise violence,
and their lips talk of mischief.
- ³ By wisdom a house is built,
and by understanding it is
established;
⁴ by knowledge the rooms are filled
with all precious and pleasant
riches.
- ⁵ A wise man is mightier than a strong
man,^q
and a man of knowledge than he
who has strength;
⁶ for by wise guidance you can wage
your war,
and in abundance of counselors
there is victory.
- ⁷ Wisdom is too high for a fool;
in the gate he does not open his
mouth.
- ⁸ He who plans to do evil
will be called a mischief-maker.
⁹ The devising of folly is sin,
and the scoffer is an abomination
to men.
- ¹⁰ If you faint in the day of adversity,
your strength is small.
¹¹ Rescue those who are being taken
away to death;
hold back those who are
stumbling to the slaughter.
- ¹² If you say, “Behold, we did not
know this,”
does not he who weighs the
heart perceive it?
Does not he who keeps watch over
your soul know it,
and will he not requite man
according to his work?
- ¹³ My son, eat honey, for it is good,
and the drippings of the
honeycomb are sweet to
your taste.
- ¹⁴ Know that wisdom is such to your
soul;
if you find it, there will be a
future,
and your hope will not be cut off.
- ¹⁵ Lie not in wait as a wicked man
against the dwelling of the
righteous;
do not violence to his home;
¹⁶ for a righteous man falls seven
times, and rises again;
but the wicked are overthrown by
calamity.
- ¹⁷ Do not rejoice when your enemy
falls,
and let not your heart be glad
when he stumbles;
¹⁸ lest the LORD see it, and be
displeased,
and turn away his anger from him.
- ¹⁹ Fret not yourself because of
evildoers,
and be not envious of the wicked;
²⁰ for the evil man has no future;
the lamp of the wicked will be put
out.
- ²¹ My son, fear the LORD and the king,
and do not disobey either of
them;^r
²² for disaster from them will rise
suddenly,
and who knows the ruin that will
come from them both?
- ²³ These also are sayings of the wise.
Partiality in judging is not good.
²⁴ He who says to the wicked, “You
are innocent,”
will be cursed by peoples,
abhorred by nations;
²⁵ but those who rebuke the wicked
will have delight,
and a good blessing will be upon
them.

^q Gk Compare Syr Tg: Heb *is in strength*
^r Gk: Heb *do not associate with those who change*

- ²⁶ He who gives a right answer
kisses the lips.
- ²⁷ Prepare your work outside,
get everything ready for you in
the field;
and after that build your house.
- ²⁸ Be not a witness against your
neighbor without cause,
and do not deceive with your lips.
- ²⁹ Do not say, "I will do to him as he
has done to me;
I will pay the man back for what
he has done."
- ³⁰ I passed by the field of a sluggard,
by the vineyard of a man without
sense;
- ³¹ and lo, it was all overgrown with
thorns;
the ground was covered with
nettles,
and its stone wall was broken
down.
- ³² Then I saw and considered it;
I looked and received instruction.
- ³³ A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
- ³⁴ and poverty will come upon you
like a robber,
and want like an armed man.

25 These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.

- ² It is the glory of God to conceal
things,
but the glory of kings is to search
things out.
- ³ As the heavens for height, and the
earth for depth,
so the mind of kings is
unsearchable.

- ⁴ Take away the dross from the silver,
and the smith has material for a
vessel;
- ⁵ take away the wicked from the
presence of the king,
and his throne will be established
in righteousness.
- ⁶ Do not put yourself forward in the
king's presence
or stand in the place of the great;
- ⁷ for it is better to be told, "Come up
here,"
than to be put lower in the
presence of the prince.

What your eyes have seen

- ⁸ do not hastily bring into court;
for^s what will you do in the end,
when your neighbor puts you to
shame?
- ⁹ Argue your case with your neighbor
himself,
and do not disclose another's
secret;
- ¹⁰ lest he who hears you bring shame
upon you,
and your ill repute have no end.
- ¹¹ A word fitly spoken
is like apples of gold in a setting
of silver.
- ¹² Like a gold ring or an ornament of
gold
is a wise reprover to a listening
ear.
- ¹³ Like the cold of snow in the time of
harvest
is a faithful messenger to those
who send him,
he refreshes the spirit of his
masters.
- ¹⁴ Like clouds and wind without rain
is a man who boasts of a gift he
does not give.

^s Cn: Heb *lest*

lips, i.e. is a true friend. **27**: Prudent preparation is the way to success. **29**: Rom.12.21. **30-34**: 6.6-11.

25.1-29.27: Book IV, a second collection of "Proverbs of Solomon"; see Introduction. **25.1**: *Men of Hezekiah*, scribes of king Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.), who sought to model himself on Solomon (2 Chr.30.26; 32.27-29). **2-3**: The king, like God, questions men but cannot be questioned. **7**: Lk.14.7-11. **7c-10**: A caution against rash accusations (compare Mt.18.15-17). **13**: *Cold of snow*, a drink cooled with snow from Mount Hermon (compare Jer.18.14). **14**: After the summer drought autumn rains were eagerly looked for. **15-16**: Moral instruction

- ¹⁵ With patience a ruler may be persuaded,
and a soft tongue will break a bone.
- ¹⁶ If you have found honey, eat only enough for you,
lest you be sated with it and vomit it.
- ¹⁷ Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house,
lest he become weary of you and hate you.
- ¹⁸ A man who bears false witness against his neighbor
is like a war club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow.
- ¹⁹ Trust in a faithless man in time of trouble
is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips.
- ²⁰ He who sings songs to a heavy heart
is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day,
and like vinegar on a wound.^t
- ²¹ If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat;
and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;
- ²² for you will heap coals of fire on his head,
and the LORD will reward you.
- ²³ The north wind brings forth rain;
and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.
- ²⁴ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop
than in a house shared with a contentious woman.
- ²⁵ Like cold water to a thirsty soul,
so is good news from a far country.
- ²⁶ Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain
is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked.
- ²⁷ It is not good to eat much honey,
so be sparing of complimentary words.^u
- ²⁸ A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.
- 26** Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
so honor is not fitting for a fool.
- ² Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying,
a curse that is causeless does not alight.
- ³ A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,
and a rod for the back of fools.
- ⁴ Answer not a fool according to his folly,
lest you be like him yourself.
- ⁵ Answer a fool according to his folly,
lest he be wise in his own eyes.
- ⁶ He who sends a message by the hand of a fool
cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.
- ⁷ Like a lame man's legs, which hang useless,
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- ⁸ Like one who binds the stone in the sling
is he who gives honor to a fool.
- ⁹ Like a thorn that goes up into the hand of a drunkard
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- ¹⁰ Like an archer who wounds everybody
is he who hires a passing fool or drunkard.^v
- ¹¹ Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool that repeats his folly.
- ¹² Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

^t Gk: Heb *lye*^u Cf Compare Gk Syr Tg: Heb *searching out their glory is glory*^v The Hebrew text of this verse is uncertain

through figures of speech. **21–22:** *Heap coals of fire*, i.e. torture is less effective than mercy, or the best way to take vengeance on one's enemy is to be merciful to him (Rom.12.20; Mt.5.44–45). **26:** *Gives way*, or "falters."

26.1: Summer in Palestine is hot and dry. **2:** *Does not alight*, has no effect. **4–5:** *According to his folly* in v. 4 means "in a fool's words"; in v. 5, "as a fool deserves." **6:** *Drinks violence*, invites trouble (4.17). **8:** A stone tied in its sling is useless. **9:** Alternative translation of *thorn*,

- ¹³ The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road!
There is a lion in the streets!"
- ¹⁴ As a door turns on its hinges,
so does a sluggard on his bed.
- ¹⁵ The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.
- ¹⁶ The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven men who can answer discreetly.
- ¹⁷ He who meddles in a quarrel not his own
is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.
- ¹⁸ Like a madman who throws firebrands,
arrows, and death,
- ¹⁹ is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I am only joking!"
- ²⁰ For lack of wood the fire goes out;
and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.
- ²¹ As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
- ²² The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.
- ²³ Like the glaze^w covering an earthen vessel
are smooth^x lips with an evil heart.
- ²⁴ He who hates, dissembles with his lips
and harbors deceit in his heart;
- ²⁵ when he speaks graciously, believe him not,
for there are seven abominations in his heart;
- ²⁶ though his hatred be covered with guile,
his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.
- ²⁷ He who digs a pit will fall into it,

- and a stone will come back upon him who starts it rolling.
- ²⁸ A lying tongue hates its victims,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.
- 27** Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring forth.
- ² Let another praise you, and not your own mouth;
a stranger, and not your own lips.
- ³ A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty,
but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.
- ⁴ Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming;
but who can stand before jealousy?
- ⁵ Better is open rebuke than hidden love.
- ⁶ Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.
- ⁷ He who is sated loathes honey,
but to one who is hungry everything bitter is sweet.
- ⁸ Like a bird that strays from its nest,
is a man who strays from his home.
- ⁹ Oil and perfume make the heart glad,
but the soul is torn by trouble.^y
- ¹⁰ Your friend, and your father's friend, do not forsake;
and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity.
Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.
- ¹¹ Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad,
that I may answer him who reproaches me.
- ¹² A prudent man sees danger and hides himself;
but the simple go on, and suffer for it.

^w Cn: Heb silver of dross ^x Gk: Heb burning
^y Gk: Heb the sweetness of his friend from hearty counsel

"pointed stick." *Goes up into*, "is taken up by." **22:** See 18.8 n. **23-26:** A folk proverb with comments.

27.3: A fool's, or "by a fool." **6:** Faithful, sincere. *Profuse*, false. **9b:** Alternative translation: "so the sweetness of a friend strengthens the soul" (16.24). **10:** The third line explains the

- ¹³ Take a man's garment when he
has given surety for a stranger,
and hold him in pledge when he
gives surety for foreigners.^z
- ¹⁴ He who blesses his neighbor with
a loud voice,
rising early in the morning,
will be counted as cursing.
- ¹⁵ A continual dripping on a rainy day
and a contentious woman are alike;
¹⁶ to restrain her is to restrain the
wind^a
or to grasp oil in his right hand.
- ¹⁷ Iron sharpens iron,
and one man sharpens another.
- ¹⁸ He who tends a fig tree will eat its
fruit,
and he who guards his master
will be honored.
- ¹⁹ As in water face answers to face,
so the mind of man reflects the
man.
- ²⁰ Sheol and Abaddon are never
satisfied,
and never satisfied are the eyes of
man.
- ²¹ The crucible is for silver, and the
furnace is for gold,
and a man is judged by his praise.
- ²² Crush a fool in a mortar with a
pestle
along with crushed grain,
yet his folly will not depart from
him.
- ²³ Know well the condition of your
flocks,
and give attention to your herds;
²⁴ for riches do not last for ever;
and does a crown endure to all
generations?
- ²⁵ When the grass is gone, and the new
growth appears,
and the herbage of the mountains
is gathered,
²⁶ the lambs will provide your clothing,
and the goats the price of a field;
²⁷ there will be enough goats' milk
for your food,

for the food of your household
and maintenance for your
maidens.

- 28** The wicked flee when no one
pursues,
but the righteous are bold as a
lion.
- ² When a land transgresses
it has many rulers;
but with men of understanding and
knowledge
its stability will long continue.
- ³ A poor man who oppresses the
poor
is a beating rain that leaves no
food.
- ⁴ Those who forsake the law praise
the wicked,
but those who keep the law strive
against them.
- ⁵ Evil men do not understand justice,
but those who seek the LORD
understand it completely.
- ⁶ Better is a poor man who walks in
his integrity
than a rich man who is perverse in
his ways.
- ⁷ He who keeps the law is a wise son,
but a companion of gluttons
shames his father.
- ⁸ He who augments his wealth by
interest and increase
gathers it for him who is kind to
the poor.
- ⁹ If one turns away his ear from
hearing the law,
even his prayer is an abomination.
- ¹⁰ He who misleads the upright into
an evil way
will fall into his own pit;
but the blameless will have a
goodly inheritance.
- ¹¹ A rich man is wise in his own eyes,
but a poor man who has
understanding will find him out.
- ¹² When the righteous triumph, there
is great glory;

^z Vg and 20.16: Heb *a foreign woman*
^a Heb *obscure*

second. **13:** Do not hesitate to exact a pledge made rashly (see 6.1–5 n.). **20:** See 15.11 n. **21:** *Judged by his praise*, tested by praise.

28.3a: A difficult line, probably read “chieftain” for “poor man.” **12:** *Glory*, delight (20.29).

- but when the wicked rise, men
hide themselves.
- 13 He who conceals his transgressions
will not prosper,
but he who confesses and
forsakes them will obtain mercy.
- 14 Blessed is the man who fears the
LORD always;
but he who hardens his heart will
fall into calamity.
- 15 Like a roaring lion or a charging
bear
is a wicked ruler over a poor
people.
- 16 A ruler who lacks understanding is
a cruel oppressor;
but he who hates unjust gain will
prolong his days.
- 17 If a man is burdened with the
blood of another,
let him be a fugitive until death;
let no one help him.
- 18 He who walks in integrity will be
delivered,
but he who is perverse in his
ways will fall into a pit.^b
- 19 He who tills his land will have plenty
of bread,
but he who follows worthless
pursuits will have plenty of
poverty.
- 20 A faithful man will abound with
blessings,
but he who hastens to be rich will
not go unpunished.
- 21 To show partiality is not good;
but for a piece of bread a man
will do wrong.
- 22 A miserly man hastens after wealth,
and does not know that want will
come upon him.
- 23 He who rebukes a man will
afterward find more favor
than he who flatters with his
tongue.
- 24 He who robs his father or his
mother
and says, "That is no
transgression,"
is the companion of a man who
destroys.

- 25 A greedy man stirs up strife,
but he who trusts in the LORD
will be enriched.
- 26 He who trusts in his own mind is a
fool;
but he who walks in wisdom will
be delivered.
- 27 He who gives to the poor will not
want,
but he who hides his eyes will get
many a curse.
- 28 When the wicked rise, men hide
themselves,
but when they perish, the
righteous increase.
- 29 He who is often reproved, yet
stiffens his neck
will suddenly be broken beyond
healing.
- 2 When the righteous are in authority,
the people rejoice;
but when the wicked rule, the
people groan.
- 3 He who loves wisdom makes his
father glad,
but one who keeps company with
harlots squanders his
substance.
- 4 By justice a king gives stability to
the land,
but one who exacts gifts ruins it.
- 5 A man who flatters his neighbor
spreads a net for his feet.
- 6 An evil man is ensnared in his
transgression,
but a righteous man sings and
rejoices.
- 7 A righteous man knows the rights of
the poor;
a wicked man does not
understand such knowledge.
- 8 Scoffers set a city aflame,
but wise men turn away wrath.
- 9 If a wise man has an argument with
a fool,
the fool only rages and laughs, and
there is no quiet.
- 10 Bloodthirsty men hate one who is
blameless,
and the wicked^c seek his life.

b. Syr: Heb in one c. Cn: Heb upright

29.4: Gifts, forced contributions. 9: And there is no quiet, or, "no satisfaction." 13: 22.2;

- ¹¹ A fool gives full vent to his anger,
but a wise man quietly holds it
back.
- ¹² If a ruler listens to falsehood,
all his officials will be wicked.
- ¹³ The poor man and the oppressor
meet together;
the LORD gives light to the eyes
of both.
- ¹⁴ If a king judges the poor with
equity
his throne will be established for
ever.
- ¹⁵ The rod and reproof give wisdom,
but a child left to himself brings
shame to his mother.
- ¹⁶ When the wicked are in authority,
transgression increases;
but the righteous will look upon
their downfall.
- ¹⁷ Discipline your son, and he will give
you rest;
he will give delight to your heart.
- ¹⁸ Where there is no prophecy the
people cast off restraint,
but blessed is he who keeps the
law.
- ¹⁹ By mere words a servant is not
disciplined,
for though he understands, he will
not give heed.
- ²⁰ Do you see a man who is hasty in
his words?
There is more hope for a fool than
for him.
- ²¹ He who pampers his servant from
childhood,
will in the end find him his heir.^d
- ²² A man of wrath stirs up strife,
and a man given to anger causes
much transgression.
- ²³ A man's pride will bring him low,
but he who is lowly in spirit will
obtain honor.
- ²⁴ The partner of a thief hates his own
life;
he hears the curse, but discloses
nothing.
- ²⁵ The fear of man lays a snare,
but he who trusts in the LORD is
safe.
- ²⁶ Many seek the favor of a ruler,
but from the LORD a man gets
justice.
- ²⁷ An unjust man is an abomination to
the righteous,
but he whose way is straight is an
abomination to the wicked.
- 30** The words of Agur son of Jakeh
of Massa.^e
- The man says to Ith'i-el,
to Ith'i-el and Ucal:^f
- ² Surely I am too stupid to be a man.
I have not the understanding of a
man.
- ³ I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the
Holy One.
- ⁴ Who has ascended to heaven and
come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his
fists?
Who has wrapped up the waters in
a garment?
Who has established all the ends
of the earth?
What is his name, and what is his
son's name?
Surely you know!
- ⁵ Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take
refuge in him.
- ^d The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain
^e Or the oracle
^f The Hebrew of this verse is obscure

Mt. 5.45. 18: *He who keeps*, or "that people which keeps." 21: For *his heir* read perhaps "refractory." 24: A guilty secret is a danger.

30.1-9: Appendix II, dialogue of a sceptic and a believer, recalling Job. 1: *Massa*, a tribe in Arabia in Gen.25.14; 1 Chr.1.30; but see note *e* and 31.1 note *k*. *Agur* is unknown and was probably, like Job, not an Israelite. To *Ithiel* . . . *Ucal*, not proper names but the obscure opening of the first speech; if the words are Aramaic they may mean: "There is no God . . . and I am doomed." 2-3: Ironical; religious wisdom is easy for others but not for him (Job 26.3). 4: *Ascended . . . and come down*, bringing revelation. How can man know the Creator? (Job. 38.4, 8-9). *His name . . . his son's name*, a rhetorical way of asking who knows God so familiarly.

- ⁶ Do not add to his words,
lest he rebuke you, and you be
found a liar.
- ⁷ Two things I ask of thee;
deny them not to me before I die:
- ⁸ Remove far from me falsehood and
lying;
give me neither poverty nor
riches;
feed me with the food that is
needful for me,
- ⁹ lest I be full, and deny thee,
and say, "Who is the LORD?"
or lest I be poor, and steal,
and profane the name of my God.
- ¹⁰ Do not slander a servant to his
master,
lest he curse you, and you be
held guilty.
- ¹¹ There are those who curse their
fathers
and do not bless their mothers.
- ¹² There are those who are pure in
their own eyes
but are not cleansed of their filth.
- ¹³ There are those—how lofty are their
eyes,
how high their eyelids lift!
- ¹⁴ There are those whose teeth are
swords,
whose teeth are knives,
to devour the poor from off the earth,
the needy from among men.
- ¹⁵ The leech^g has two daughters;
"Give, give," they cry.
Three things are never satisfied;
four never say, "Enough":
- ¹⁶ Sheol, the barren womb,
the earth ever thirsty for water,
and the fire which never says,
"Enough."^h
- ¹⁷ The eye that mocks a father
and scorns to obey a mother
will be picked out by the ravens of
the valley
and eaten by the vultures.
- ¹⁸ Three things are too wonderful for
me;
four I do not understand:
- ¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a serpent on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a
maiden.
- ²⁰ This is the way of an adulteress:
she eats, and wipes her mouth,
and says, "I have done no wrong."
- ²¹ Under three things the earth
trembles;
under four it cannot bear up:
- ²² a slave when he becomes king,
and a fool when he is filled with
food;
- ²³ an unloved woman when she gets a
husband,
and a maid when she succeeds
her mistress.
- ²⁴ Four things on earth are small,
but they are exceedingly wise:
- ²⁵ the ants are a people not strong,
yet they provide their food in the
summer;
- ²⁶ the badgers are a people not mighty,
yet they make their homes in the
rocks;
- ²⁷ the locusts have no king,
yet all of them march in rank;
- ²⁸ the lizard you can take in your hands,
yet it is in kings' palaces.
- ^g The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain
^h Heb obscure

5-6: The reply: God's promises are true and he will rebuke presumption (Job 40.2). 7-9: He asks only *two* things—truth and daily food (Job 13.20; 14.1-6).

30.10-33: Appendix III, admonitions and numerical proverbs (see 6.16-19 n.). 11-14: Four types of sinners—the unfilial, self-satisfied, arrogant, and avaricious. 15-16: A folk proverb, and four things which are insatiable. *Two daughters*, "Give" and "Give." 18-19: Four wonders. 20: *She eats and wipes her mouth*, a euphemism. 21-23: Four intolerable situations. 24-28: Four small creatures which can teach man lessons. 29-31: Four examples of arrogance. *Striding before*, or "dominating."

- ²⁹ Three things are stately in their tread;
four are stately in their stride:
³⁰ the lion, which is mightiest among beasts
and does not turn back before any;
³¹ the strutting cock,ⁱ the he-goat,
and a king striding before^j his people.
- ³² If you have been foolish, exalting yourself,
or if you have been devising evil,
put your hand on your mouth.
- ³³ For pressing milk produces curds,
pressing the nose produces blood,
and pressing anger produces strife.

31 The words of Lemuel, king of Massa,^k which his mother taught him:

- ² What, my son? What, son of my womb?
What, son of my vows?
- ³ Give not your strength to women,
your ways to those who destroy kings.
- ⁴ It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine,
or for rulers to desire^l strong drink;
- ⁵ lest they drink and forget what has been decreed,
and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
- ⁶ Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
and wine to those in bitter distress;
- ⁷ let them drink and forget their poverty,

- and remember their misery no more.
- ⁸ Open your mouth for the dumb,
for the rights of all who are left desolate.^m
- ⁹ Open your mouth, judge righteously,
maintain the rights of the poor and needy.
- ¹⁰ A good wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
- ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
- ¹² She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
- ¹⁴ She is like the ships of the merchant,
she brings her food from afar.
- ¹⁵ She rises while it is yet night
and provides food for her household
and tasks for her maidens.
- ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She girds her loins with strength
and makes her arms strong.
- ¹⁸ She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
- ¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
- ²⁰ She opens her hand to the poor,
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
- ²¹ She is not afraid of snow for her household,

ⁱ Gk Syr Tg Compare Vg: Heb obscure
^j The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain
^k Or King Lemuel, the oracle ^l Cn: Heb where
^m Heb are sons of passing away

31.1-9: Appendix IV, a queen mother's counsel. 1: King *Lemuel* is unidentified; the text is probably corrupt. *Massa* is here not a place name, but a word meaning a solemn charge or oracle (Jer.23.23-33; see note *k*). **3-7:** The king is warned against succumbing to the wiles of women who would sap his strength (compare 2.16-19; 5.3-4), and to avoid wine and strong drink lest he rule unwisely and unjustly. Strong drink and wine have a place as an opiate for the unfortunate and poor. **8-9:** These verses recall the concern of the prophets.

31.10-31: Appendix V, an acrostic on the ideal housewife. The good wife has a status of honor in the opinion of the author of this fine bit of wisdom literature. She is more precious than jewels, trusted by her husband, wise, industrious in providing for the needs of her household even to the point of engaging in commerce, considerate of the less fortunate, and praised by her family.

- for all her household are clothed
in scarlet.
- ²² She makes herself coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and
purple.
- ²³ Her husband is known in the
gates,
when he sits among the elders
of the land.
- ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells
them;
she delivers girdles to the
merchant.
- ²⁵ Strength and dignity are her
clothing,
and she laughs at the time to
come.
- ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on
her tongue.
- ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her
household,
and does not eat the bread of
idleness.
- ²⁸ Her children rise up and call her
blessed;
her husband also, and he praises
her:
- ²⁹ "Many women have done
excellently,
but you surpass them all."
- ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is
vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD
is to be praised.
- ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the
gates.

ECCLESIASTES

OR THE PREACHER

Ecclesiastes contains the reflections of a philosopher rather than a testimony of belief. The author seeks to understand by the use of reason the meaning of human existence and the good which man can find in life. He questions many of the accepted beliefs of Hebrew tradition. To him God is the inscrutable originator of the world and determiner of man's fate. As the natural world is in constant movement without real change, so man's expenditure of effort achieves nothing. All is "vanity," a breath, unsubstantial and fleeting. Man's character and accomplishments make no difference to his fate, which is the same as that of beasts. Yet, though reason leaves him baffled, the author nevertheless affirms that life with its limitations is worth living. One must face facts, accept what cannot be changed, and enjoy whatever good things God permits until death brings oblivion.

The author is described in 12.9-10 as a sage, a teacher, and a skilled writer. The literary role of Solomon is assumed only in chapters 1-2. The rationalistic tone of the book and its echoes of Greek philosophies point to a date about the third century B.C. Except for the opening statement of the theme and the concluding poem on old age, the work is without formal structure. "Ecclesiastes" is an attempted Greek translation of the author's pen-name, *Qoheleth*. This comes from the same Hebrew root as *qahal*, "assembly," and means one who conducts an assembly or school.

The inclusion in the Jewish canon of Scripture of a work so much at variance with its dominant teaching may be explained by the traditional association with Solomon, its sponsorship by influential "wise men," and the inclusion of an orthodox postscript (12.9-14) which lays down the religious position in the light of which it is to be understood.

THE WORDS OF THE PREACHER,^a
the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

- ² Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.
³ What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils under the sun?
⁴ A generation goes, and a generation
comes,
but the earth remains for ever.
⁵ The sun rises and the sun goes down,
and hastens to the place where it
rises.
⁶ The wind blows to the south,
and goes round to the north;
round and round goes the wind,
and on its circuits the wind returns.
⁷ All streams run to the sea,
but the sea is not full;
to the place where the streams flow,
there they flow again.

- ⁸ All things are full of weariness;
a man cannot utter it;
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,
nor the ear filled with hearing.
⁹ What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what
will be done;
and there is nothing new under the
sun.
¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said,
"See, this is new"?
It has been already,
in the ages before us.
¹¹ There is no remembrance of former
things,
nor will there be any
remembrance
of later things yet to happen
among those who come after.
12 I the Preacher have been king
over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³ And I

a Heb *Koheleth*

1.1-3: Title and thesis. Experience is as fleeting and unsubstantial as *vanity*, "a breath."

1.4-11: Evidence for the thesis—generations pass, nature is in ceaseless motion, but nothing new results.

1.12-2.11: The fruitless search for the fruit of human effort (a) to change the world, (b) to reach understanding, (c) to possess happiness. 13: *Unhappy business*, "sore (grievous) task."

applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. ¹⁴ I have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.^b

¹⁵ What is crooked cannot be made straight,
and what is lacking cannot be numbered.

¹⁶ I said to myself, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

¹⁷ And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

¹⁸ For in much wisdom is much vexation,
and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

Q I said to myself, "Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity. ² I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?"

³ I searched with my mind how to cheer my body with wine—my mind still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven during the few days of their life. ⁴ I made great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; ⁵ I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶ I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house; I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold

and the treasure of kings and provinces; I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines,^c man's delight.

⁹ So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹ Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

¹² So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly; for what can the man do who comes after the king? Only what he has already done. ¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. ¹⁴ The wise man has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness; and yet I perceived that one fate comes to all of them. ¹⁵ Then I said to myself, "What befalls the fool will befall me also; why then have I been so very wise?" And I said to myself that this also is vanity. ¹⁶ For of the wise man as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise man dies just like the fool! ¹⁷ So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me; for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

¹⁸ I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me; ¹⁹ and who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I turned about and gave my heart

^b Or a feeding on wind. See Hos 12.1

^c The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

15: Numbered, "made up." **16:** The writer forgets that Jerusalem became Hebrew only one generation before Solomon. **17:** Know, "analyze." **2.4-9:** Solomon's fabulous magnificence (1 Kg. ch. 10). **10:** An absolute monarch is free to experiment. Qoheleth's great discovery was that satisfaction lies in effort even without tangible result.

2.12-26: Mortality robs wisdom and labor of their fruits; man's sole good is present enjoy-

up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun,²¹ because sometimes a man who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by a man who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil.²² What has a man from all the toil and strain with which he toils beneath the sun?²³ For all his days are full of pain, and his work is a vexation; even in the night his mind does not rest. This also is vanity.

24 There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God;²⁵ for apart from him^d who can eat or who can have enjoyment?²⁶ For to the man who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives the work of gathering and heaping, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

- ² a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck
up what is planted;
- ³ a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to
build up;
- ⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- ⁵ a time to cast away stones, and a
time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to
refrain from embracing;
- ⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast
away;
- ⁷ a time to rend, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to
speak;

- ⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for
peace.

- ⁹ What gain has the worker from
his toil?

10 I have seen the business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with.¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.¹² I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live;¹³ also that it is God's gift to man that every one should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil.¹⁴ I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has made it so, in order that men should fear before him.¹⁵ That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away.

16 Moreover I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness.¹⁷ I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every matter, and for every work.¹⁸ I said in my heart with regard to the sons of men that God is testing them to show them that they are but beasts.¹⁹ For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity.²⁰ All

d Gk Syr: Heb apart from me

ment, if God so wills. **26:** *For . . . pleases God*, a note originally made in the margin of the manuscript by a scribe, correcting the view that goodness makes no difference to man's fate.

3.1-15: Man can neither understand nor change the predetermined pattern of his life. Everything happens at the time fixed for it. **11:** Perhaps instead of *eternity* it would be better to translate "obscurity," taking the Hebrew word from a root meaning "conceal." This fits the context. **15:** *Seeks what has been driven away*, causes the past to be repeated.

3.16-4.3: Possible explanations of prevalent evil: (a) God decrees both good and evil, or (b) men are animals and moral distinctions are an illusion. Life is an evil to those who suffer. **16:** *Place*, law court or temple. **18:** *Testing*, literally, "polishing." **19:** *Vanity*, "transience,"

go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. ²¹ Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth? ²² So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should enjoy his work, for that is his lot; who can bring him to see what will be after him?

4 Again I saw all the oppressions that are practiced under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. ² And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive; ³ but better than both is he who has not yet been, and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

5 The fool folds his hands, and eats his own flesh.

6 Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun: ⁸ a person who has no one, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift

him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they are warm; but how can one be warm alone? ¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13 Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king, who will no longer take advice, ¹⁴ even though he had gone from prison to the throne or in his own kingdom had been born poor. ¹⁵ I saw all the living who move about under the sun, as well as that youth, who was to stand in his place; ¹⁶ there was no end of all the people; he was over all of them. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

5^s Guard your steps when you go to the house of God; to draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know that they are doing evil. ^{2h} Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few.

3 For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

4 When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. ⁵ It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. ⁶ Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messengerⁱ that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your voice, and destroy the work of your hands?

^f Heb the second ^g Ch 4.17 in Heb
^h Ch 5.1 in Heb ⁱ Or angel

thus revealing man's insignificance. **21:** Man must be agnostic, for there is no proof of survival; his only good is to enjoy life while he can.

4.4-12: The folly of consuming life through envy or greed. **5-6:** A popular proverb quoted and refuted by a second. **7-12:** A miser's wealth is a poor substitute for human companionship.

4.13-16: The impermanence of fame; a king who rose from obscurity will be supplanted by one like himself whose glory in turn will pass away.

5.1-7: Advice on religious observance. Qoheleth deprecates enthusiastic but ignorant piety; the reflective man will maintain his detachment, but will pay such vows as he makes. **6:** The messenger who comes to collect what has been vowed. **7:** Though dreams and empty words are associated with religion by fools, the wise man will reverence God.

7 For when dreams increase, empty words grow many:^j but do you fear God.

8 If you see in a province the poor oppressed and justice and right violently taken away, do not be amazed at the matter; for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.⁹ But in all, a king is an advantage to a land with cultivated fields.^k

10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money; nor he who loves wealth, with gain: this also is vanity.

11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them; and what gain has their owner but to see them with his eyes?

12 Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much; but the surfeit of the rich will not let him sleep.

13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt,¹⁴ and those riches were lost in a bad venture; and he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand.¹⁵ As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil, which he may carry away in his hand.¹⁶ This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go; and what gain has he that he toiled for the wind,¹⁷ and spent all his days in darkness and grief,^l in much vexation and sickness and resentment?

18 Behold, what I have seen to be good and to be fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life which God has given him, for this is his lot.¹⁹ Every man also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and find enjoyment in his toil—this is the gift of God.²⁰ For he will not much remember the days of his life because

God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

6 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy upon men:² a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them; this is vanity; it is a sore affliction.³ If a man begets a hundred children, and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but he does not enjoy life's good things, and also has no burial, I say that an untimely birth is better off than he.⁴ For it comes into vanity and goes into darkness, and in darkness its name is covered;⁵ moreover it has not seen the sun or known anything; yet it finds rest rather than he.⁶ Even though he should live a thousand years twice told, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?

7 All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied.⁸ For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living?⁹ Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire; this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

10 Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is, and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he.¹¹ The more words, the more vanity, and what is man the better?¹² For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?

7 A good name is better than precious ointment;

^j Or: For in a multitude of dreams there is futility, and ruin in a flood of words

^k Or: The profit of the land is among all of them; a cultivated field has a king

^l Gk: Heb all his days also he eats in darkness

5.8-6.9: The wise man is not disturbed by oppression, which is the responsibility of those in authority; nor does he yield to the drive of desires which can never be satisfied.

6.10-7.12: Man cannot change his lot nor foresee the future or the ultimate good. But he can experience what is relatively good, as illustrated by seven proverbs commending reflection and

and the day of death, than the day of birth.

- ² It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting;
for this is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart.
- ³ Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of countenance the heart is made glad.
- ⁴ The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.
- ⁵ It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools.
- ⁶ For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fools; this also is vanity.
- ⁷ Surely oppression makes the wise man foolish, and a bribe corrupts the mind.
- ⁸ Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.
- ⁹ Be not quick to anger, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools.
- ¹⁰ Say not, "Why were the former days better than these?"
For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.
- ¹¹ Wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun.
- ¹² For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money; and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.
- ¹³ Consider the work of God;

who can make straight what he has made crooked?

¹⁴ In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

¹⁵ In my vain life I have seen everything; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evil-doing. ¹⁶ Be not righteous overmuch, and do not make yourself overwise; why should you destroy yourself? ¹⁷ Be not wicked overmuch, neither be a fool; why should you die before your time? ¹⁸ It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand; for he who fears God shall come forth from them all.

¹⁹ Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers that are in a city.

²⁰ Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

²¹ Do not give heed to all the things that men say, lest you hear your servant cursing you; ²² your heart knows that many times you have yourself cursed others.

²³ All this I have tested by wisdom; I said, "I will be wise"; but it was far from me. ²⁴ That which is, is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out? ²⁵ I turned my mind to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the sum of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness which is madness. ²⁶ And I found more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters; he who pleases God escapes her, but the

self-control. **7.1:** Reputation is never secure until death. **11-12:** A wise heir will live to enjoy his inheritance.

7.13-21: Since man cannot change the order of the world, and righteousness brings no advantage, the moderation of the wise man is better than folly or excessive piety. **18:** *Come forth from them all*, having done his duty.

7.23-8.9: The meaning of existence is hidden, and few men and no women seek it; their schemes to alter the unalterable are vain. The wise man will accommodate himself to the harsh facts of life and its uncertainties.

sinner is taken by her. ²⁷ Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, adding one thing to another to find the sum, ²⁸ which my mind has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. ²⁹ Behold, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices.

8 Who is like the wise man?

8 And who knows the interpretation of a thing?

A man's wisdom makes his face shine,

and the hardness of his countenance is changed.

2 Keep^m the king's command, and because of your sacred oath be not dismayed; ³ go from his presence, do not delay when the matter is unpleasant, for he does whatever he pleases.

⁴ For the word of the king is supreme, and who may say to him, "What are you doing?" ⁵ He who obeys a command will meet no harm, and the mind of a wise man will know the time and way. ⁶ For every matter has its time and way, although man's trouble lies heavy upon him. ⁷ For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be? ⁸ No man has power to retain the spirit, or authority over the day of death; there is no discharge from war, nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it. ⁹ All this I observed while applying my mind to all that is done under the sun, while man lords it over man to his hurt.

10 Then I saw the wicked buried; they used to go in and out of the holy place, and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity. ¹¹ Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the sons of men is fully set to do evil. ¹² Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and

prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him; ¹³ but it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

14 There is a vanity which takes place on earth, that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. ¹⁵ And I commend enjoyment, for man has no good thing under the sun but to eat and drink, and enjoy himself, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of life which God gives him under the sun.

16 When I applied my mind to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on earth, how neither day nor night one's eyes see sleep; ¹⁷ then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out; even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

9 But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God; whether it is love or hate man does not know. Everything before them is vanity,ⁿ ² since one fate comes to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil,^o to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good man, so is the sinner; and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. ³ This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that one fate comes to all; also the hearts of men are full of evil, and madness is in

^m Heb inserts an /

ⁿ Syr Compare Gk: Heb *Everything before them is everything*

^o Gk Syr Vg: Heb *lacks and the evil*

8.10-9.1: The failure of retribution to overtake the wicked is an anomaly one must accept; whether God is friendly or hostile no man knows.

9.2-12: Life is to be relished so far as God permits, since good and bad men meet inexorable

their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. ⁴ But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. ⁵ For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward; but the memory of them is lost. ⁶ Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and they have no more for ever any share in all that is done under the sun.

7 Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already approved what you do.

8 Let your garments be always white; let not oil be lacking on your head.

9 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life which he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

11 Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all. ¹² For man does not know his time. Like fish which are taken in an evil net, and like birds which are caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.

13 I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me. ¹⁴ There was a little city with few men in it; and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it. ¹⁵ But

there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. ¹⁶ But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heeded.

17 The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools. ¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

10 Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off an evil odor; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

² A wise man's heart inclines him toward the right, but a fool's heart toward the left.

³ Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to every one that he is a fool.

⁴ If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for deference will make amends for great offenses.

5 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler: ⁶ folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. ⁷ I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on foot like slaves.

⁸ He who digs a pit will fall into it; and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall.

⁹ He who quarries stones is hurt by them; and he who splits logs is endangered by them.

¹⁰ If the iron is blunt, and one does not whet the edge, he must put forth more strength; but wisdom helps one to succeed.

¹¹ If the serpent bites before it is charmed,

death. The operation of fate appears to be random. 10: *Sheol*, where the dead are, in dust and silence.

9.13-10.20: A parable and sundry maxims and observations on life and wisdom. Wisdom is better than might, but is despised and is vulnerable to folly. 18: *Sinner*, the fool in his moral aspect. 10.2-3,12-15: The man not directed by moral intelligence is held up to contempt. 2: *Right* and *left* have a moral connotation, as in Mt.25.33-46. 4-6: Wisdom is unperturbed by

- there is no advantage in a charmer.
- ¹² The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him.
- ¹³ The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is wicked madness.
- ¹⁴ A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him?
- ¹⁵ The toil of a fool wearies him, so that he does not know the way to the city.
- ¹⁶ Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning!
- ¹⁷ Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of free men, and your princes feast at the proper time, for strength, and not for drunkenness!
- ¹⁸ Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks.
- ¹⁹ Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything.
- ²⁰ Even in your thought, do not curse the king, nor in your bedchamber curse the rich; for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter.

- ||| Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.
- ² Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what evil may happen on earth.
- ³ If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth; and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.
- ⁴ He who observes the wind will not sow; and he who regards the clouds will not reap.

⁵ As you do not know how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb^p of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

⁶ In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

⁷ Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun.

⁸ For if a man lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

⁹ Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

¹⁰ Remove vexation from your

p Or As you do not know the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb

arbitrary power, and helps one to succeed and avoid danger. **19:** *Money answers everything*, provides it all.

11.1-6: Qoheleth calls on men to act in spite of life's uncertainties, since the satisfaction of work is not in its results anyway (compare 2.24). **1-2:** *Cast your bread*, i.e. "don't be timid," but *give a portion to . . . eight*, "diversify your risks." **3-4:** What happens will happen anyway, and man cannot wait for certainty if he would live at all.

11.7-12.8: Youth is to be relished as the best of life, since old age and death come soon. In the famous allegory of old age (12.1-7) the poetry rises to great heights, though the symbolism is not always clear. **11.8-9:** Life is to be enjoyed, but rationally and with moral responsibility.

mind, and put away pain from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

12 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; ² before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain; ³ in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look through the windows are dimmed, ⁴ and the doors on the street are shut; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low; ⁵ they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along^q and desire fails; because man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets; ⁶ before the silver cord is snapped,^r or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at

the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, ⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. ⁸ Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

9 Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging proverbs with great care. ¹⁰ The Preacher sought to find pleasing words, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.

11 The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings which are given by one Shepherd. ¹² My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.^s ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with^t every secret thing, whether good or evil.

^q Or is a burden

^r Syr Vg Compare Gk: Heb is removed

^s Or the duty of all men

^t Or into the judgment on

10: *Vanity*, "quickly passing." **12.1:** *Remember your Creator* seems unlikely counsel on the lips of Qoheleth; a very similar Hebrew word meaning "your grave" suits the context. **2-4:** Symbols of decrepitude. *Daughters of song*, "songsters." **5:** *Almond tree blossoms* are white, a figure suggesting the color of the hair of the aged. *The grasshopper drags itself along*, perhaps a figure for the stiff-legged gait of the aged. **6:** There are just two figures here: (1) the lamp falls and goes out when the silver cord is broken, and (2) the water of life fails.

12.9-14: **Editorial footnotes;** the author is described, and the values and limitations of the book are summed up from an orthodox standpoint. **11:** *Shepherd*, "teacher."

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

This book is a collection of about twenty-five lyric poems or fragments of poems of human love and courtship such as would be sung appropriately at weddings (Jer.33.11). The poetry is graceful, sensuous, and replete with erotic imagery and allusions to the ancient myth of the love of a god and a goddess on which the fertility of nature was thought to depend. The book has no literary or dramatic structure. Its unity is that of subject matter, style, and possibly of authorship. It is anonymous, since the addition of Solomon's name to the title has no support beyond the tradition that he was the composer of many proverbs and songs (1 Kg.4.32).

The Song has no overt religious content corresponding to that of the other books of the Bible, and can be so interpreted only by assuming that a mystical symbolism is involved in its highly figurative language. Its inclusion in the Old Testament is to be explained from the prophetic figure of the LORD as the "husband" of his people (Hos.2.16-19). In Christian tradition it has been interpreted as an allegory of the love of Christ for his bride, the church (Rev.21.2,9), or as symbolizing the intimate experience of divine love in the individual soul.

In its present written form the Song dates from about the third century B.C., but its material is much more ancient. Symbols and motifs derived from early mythology are still recognizable, but their original reference has been forgotten and they have become part of the special language of human love and courtship. It should be noted that the translation is sometimes uncertain because many words employed in these poems are rare in Biblical Hebrew.

THE SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS
Solomon's.

⁶ Do not gaze at me because I am
swarthy,
because the sun has scorched me.
My mother's sons were angry with
me,
they made me keeper of the
vineyards;
but, my own vineyard I have not
kept!

² O that you^a would kiss me with the
kisses of your^b mouth!

For your love is better than wine,
³ your anointing oils are fragrant,
your name is oil poured out;
therefore the maidens love you.

⁴ Draw me after you, let us make
haste.
The king has brought me into his
chambers.

We will exult and rejoice in you;
we will extol your love more than
wine;
rightly do they love you.

⁷ Tell me, you whom my soul loves,
where you pasture your flock,
where you make it lie down at
noon;
for why should I be like one who
wanders^c
beside the flocks of your
companions?

⁵ I am very dark, but comely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
like the tents of Kedar,
like the curtains of Solomon.

⁸ If you do not know,
O fairest among women,

^a Heb *he* ^b Heb *his*
^c Gk *Syr* Vg: Heb *is veiled*

1.1: Title. *Song of songs* is a superlative, like "Holy of holies." *Which is Solomon's*, i.e. either "about Solomon," because he is named in 3.9,11 as the king being wed, or "by Solomon," a late addition based on 1 Kg.4.32.

1.2-4: The maiden longs for her lover. **3:** *Your name*, or "you." **4:** *The king*, i.e. the bridegroom. *Has brought me*, the maiden anticipates. *We*, the maiden's companions.

1.5-6: The maiden boasts of her rustic beauty, dark as *the tents of Kedar*, sumptuous as *the curtains of Solomon*.

1.7-8: The maiden asks where her lover is, and is answered by the chorus.

- follow in the tracks of the flock,
and pasture your kids
beside the shepherds' tents.
- ⁹ I compare you, my love,
to a mare of Pharaoh's chariots.
- ¹⁰ Your cheeks are comely with
ornaments,
your neck with strings of jewels.
- ¹¹ We will make you ornaments of
gold,
studded with silver.
- ¹² While the king was on his couch,
my nard gave forth its fragrance.
- ¹³ My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh,
that lies between my breasts.
- ¹⁴ My beloved is to me a cluster of
henna blossoms
in the vineyards of En-ge'di.
- ¹⁵ Behold, you are beautiful, my love;
behold, you are beautiful;
your eyes are doves.
- ¹⁶ Behold, you are beautiful, my
beloved,
truly lovely.
- Our couch is green;
¹⁷ the beams of our house are cedar,
our rafters^d are pine.

2 I am a rose^e of Sharon,
a lily of the valleys.

² As a lily among brambles,
so is my love among maidens.

³ As an apple tree among the trees
of the wood,
so is my beloved among young
men.

With great delight I sat in his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

- ⁴ He brought me to the banqueting
house,
and his banner over me was love.
- ⁵ Sustain me with raisins,
refresh me with apples;
for I am sick with love.
- ⁶ O that his left hand were under my
head,
and that his right hand embraced
me!
- ⁷ I adjure you, O daughters of
Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or the hinds of the
field,
that you stir not up nor awaken
love
until it please.
- ⁸ The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes,
leaping upon the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
- ⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle,
or a young stag.
Behold, there he stands
behind our wall,
gazing in at the windows,
looking through the lattice.
- ¹⁰ My beloved speaks and says to me:
"Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;
- ¹¹ for lo, the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.
- ¹² The flowers appear on the earth,
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.
- ¹³ The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

^d The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain
^e Heb *crocus*

1.9-11: The youth praises the bejewelled maiden.

1.12-17: The lovers' dialogue, as they lie together in the open air. *Beloved*, originally an epithet of the fertility god, here simply a term of endearment. In Is.5.1 it is applied to the LORD.
14: *En-ge'di*, a fertile oasis by the Dead Sea.

2.1-4: A second dialogue of the lovers. **1:** *Rose*, more correctly "crocus." *Sharon*, the rich coastal plain south of Carmel. **4:** *His banner over me*; translation uncertain; perhaps read, "he gazed on me with love."

2.5-7: The maiden's longing for love when the time is ripe.

2.8-14: The lover comes in the spring to summon his bride. **8:** *Voice*, or sound of his approach.

11: *Winter*, the rainy season. **14:** *Clefts* . . . *covert*, figures of the bride's home.

¹⁴ O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
in the covert of the cliff,
let me see your face,
let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is comely.

¹⁵ Catch us the foxes,
the little foxes,
that spoil the vineyards,
for our vineyards are in blossom."

¹⁶ My beloved is mine and I am his,
he pastures his flock among the
lilies.

¹⁷ Until the day breathes
and the shadows flee,
turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle,
or a young stag upon rugged/
mountains.

3 Upon my bed by night
I sought him whom my soul
loves;
I sought him, but found him not;
I called him, but he gave no
answer.^f

² "I will rise now and go about the
city,
in the streets and in the squares;
I will seek him whom my soul loves."
I sought him, but found him not.

³ The watchmen found me,
as they went about in the city.
"Have you seen him whom my soul
loves?"

⁴ Scarcely had I passed them,
when I found him whom my soul
loves.
I held him, and would not let him go
until I had brought him into my
mother's house,
and into the chamber of her that
conceived me.

⁵ I adjure you, O daughters of
Jerusalem,

by the gazelles or the hinds of the
field,
that you stir not up nor awaken love
until it please.

⁶ What is that coming up from the
wilderness,
like a column of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and
frankincense,
with all the fragrant powders of
the merchant?

⁷ Behold, it is the litter of Solomon!
About it are sixty mighty men
of the mighty men of Israel,

⁸ all girt with swords
and expert in war,
each with his sword at his thigh,
against alarms by night.

⁹ King Solomon made himself a
palanquin
from the wood of Lebanon.

¹⁰ He made its posts of silver,
its back of gold, its seat of purple;
it was lovingly wrought within^g
by the daughters of Jerusalem.

¹¹ Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
and behold King Solomon,
with the crown with which his
mother crowned him
on the day of his wedding,
on the day of the gladness of his
heart.

4 Behold, you are beautiful, my love,
behold, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are doves
behind your veil.

Your hair is like a flock of goats,
moving down the slopes of
Gilead.

² Your teeth are like a flock of shorn
ewes

^f The meaning of the Hebrew word is unknown

^g Gk: Heb lacks this line

^h The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

2.15: Apparently an allusion to what would spoil the luxuriance of love; an isolated fragment.
2.16-17: The maiden delights in her lover's presence. *Until the day breathes*, the breeze of evening.

3.1-5: The maiden dreams of searching for her lover.

3.6-11: A wedding procession of the bridegroom, in the guise of *Solomon*. **10:** Alternative translation of the third line: "Its interior was wrought in leather."

4.1-7: The bridegroom describes the charms of the maiden. **6:** *Mountain . . . hill*, her breasts.

- that have come up from the
washing,
all of which bear twins,
and not one among them is
bereaved.
- ³ Your lips are like a scarlet thread,
and your mouth is lovely.
Your cheeks are like halves of a
pomegranate
behind your veil.
- ⁴ Your neck is like the tower of David,
built for an arsenal,ⁱ
whereon hang a thousand bucklers,
all of them shields of warriors.
- ⁵ Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle,
that feed among the lilies.
- ⁶ Until the day breathes
and the shadows flee,
I will hie me to the mountain of
myrrh
and the hill of frankincense.
- ⁷ You are all fair, my love;
there is no flaw in you.
- ⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, my
bride;
come with me from Lebanon.
Depart/ from the peak of Ama'na,
from the peak of Senir and
Hermon,
from the dens of lions,
from the mountains of leopards.
- ⁹ You have ravished my heart, my
sister, my bride,
you have ravished my heart with
a glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your necklace.
- ¹⁰ How sweet is your love, my sister,
my bride!
how much better is your love than
wine,
and the fragrance of your oils than
any spice!
- ¹¹ Your lips distil nectar, my bride;
honey and milk are under your
tongue;

- the scent of your garments is like
the scent of Lebanon.
- ¹² A garden locked is my sister, my
bride,
a garden locked, a fountain sealed.
- ¹³ Your shoots are an orchard of
pomegranates
with all choicest fruits,
henna with nard,
- ¹⁴ nard and saffron, calamus and
cinnamon,
with all trees of frankincense,
myrrh and aloes,
with all chief spices—
- ¹⁵ a garden fountain, a well of living
water,
and flowing streams from
Lebanon.
- ¹⁶ Awake, O north wind,
and come, O south wind!
Blow upon my garden,
let its fragrance be wafted abroad.
Let my beloved come to his garden,
and eat its choicest fruits.

5 I come to my garden, my sister, my
bride,
I gather my myrrh with my spice,
I eat my honeycomb with my
honey,
I drink my wine with my milk.

Eat, O friends, and drink:
drink deeply, O lovers!

² I slept, but my heart was awake.
Hark! my beloved is knocking.
"Open to me, my sister, my love,
my dove, my perfect one;
for my head is wet with dew,
my locks with the drops of the
night."

³ I had put off my garment,
how could I put it on?

ⁱ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain
^j Or *Look*

4.8-15: The lover bids the maiden accompany him, and praises her love. **8:** These were the mountain dwellings of the Syrian goddess. **12:** *Locked* against any other lover. This verse should follow v. 4.

4.16-5.1: Invitation and response. **5.1:** *Drink deeply, O lovers*, or "Be intoxicated with love."

5.2-6.3: The maiden's fruitless search for her lover. A dream like that in 3.1-5 but with a different conclusion.

I had bathed my feet,
 how could I soil them?
⁴ My beloved put his hand to the
 latch,
 and my heart was thrilled within
 me.
⁵ I arose to open to my beloved,
 and my hands dripped with myrrh,
 my fingers with liquid myrrh,
 upon the handles of the bolt.
⁶ I opened to my beloved,
 but my beloved had turned and
 gone.
 My soul failed me when he spoke.
 I sought him, but found him not;
 I called him, but he gave no
 answer.
⁷ The watchmen found me,
 as they went about in the city;
 they beat me, they wounded me,
 they took away my mantle,
 those watchmen of the walls.
⁸ I adjure you, O daughters of
 Jerusalem,
 if you find my beloved,
 that you tell him
 I am sick with love.
⁹ What is your beloved more than
 another beloved,
 O fairest among women?
 What is your beloved more than
 another beloved,
 that you thus adjure us?
¹⁰ My beloved is all radiant and ruddy,
 distinguished among ten
 thousand.
¹¹ His head is the finest gold;
 his locks are wavy,
 black as a raven.
¹² His eyes are like doves
 beside springs of water,
 bathed in milk,
 fitly set.^k
¹³ His cheeks are like beds of spices,
 yielding fragrance.
 His lips are lilies,
 distilling liquid myrrh.

¹⁴ His arms are rounded gold,
 set with jewels.
 His body is ivory work,^l
 encrusted with sapphires.^m
¹⁵ His legs are alabaster columns,
 set upon bases of gold.
 His appearance is like Lebanon,
 choice as the cedars.
¹⁶ His speech is most sweet,
 and he is altogether desirable.
 This is my beloved and this is my
 friend,
 O daughters of Jerusalem.
⁶ Whither has your beloved gone,
 O fairest among women?
 Whither has your beloved turned,
 that we may seek him with you?
² My beloved has gone down to his
 garden,
 to the beds of spices,
 to pasture his flock in the gardens,
 and to gather lilies.
³ I am my beloved's and my beloved
 is mine;
 he pastures his flock among the
 lilies.
⁴ You are beautiful as Tirzah, my
 love,
 comely as Jerusalem,
 terrible as an army with banners.
⁵ Turn away your eyes from me,
 for they disturb me—
 Your hair is like a flock of goats,
 moving down the slopes of Gilead.
⁶ Your teeth are like a flock of ewes,
 that have come up from the
 washing,
 all of them bear twins,
 not one among them is bereaved.
⁷ Your cheeks are like halves of a
 pomegranate
 behind your veil.
⁸ There are sixty queens and eighty
 concubines,
 and maidens without number.

^k The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^l The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^m Heb lapis lazuli

6.4-10: The bride's superlative beauty. 4: Tirzah, once capital of north Israel (1 Kg.15.21). Terrible . . . banners, perhaps read, "awe-inspiring as the most exalted." 8-9: Queens and . . . concubines must yield precedence to her.

- ⁹ My dove, my perfect one, is only one,
the darling of her mother,
flawless to her that bore her.
The maidens saw her and called her happy;
the queens and concubines also,
and they praised her.
- ¹⁰ "Who is this that looks forth like the dawn,
fair as the moon, bright as the sun,
terrible as an army with banners?"
- ¹¹ I went down to the nut orchard,
to look at the blossoms of the valley,
to see whether the vines had budded,
whether the pomegranates were in bloom.
- ¹² Before I was aware, my fancy set me in a chariot beside my prince.ⁿ
- ¹³ Return, return, O Shu'lammitte,
return, return, that we may look upon you.

Why should you look upon the Shu'lammitte,
as upon a dance before two armies?^p

- 7** How graceful are your feet in sandals,
O queenly maiden!
Your rounded thighs are like jewels,
the work of a master hand.
- ² Your navel is a rounded bowl
that never lacks mixed wine.
Your belly is a heap of wheat,
encircled with lilies.
- ³ Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle.
- ⁴ Your neck is like an ivory tower.
Your eyes are pools in Heshbon,
by the gate of Bath-rab'bim.
Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon,
overlooking Damascus.

- ⁵ Your head crowns you like Carmel,
and your flowing locks are like purple;
a king is held captive in the tresses.^q
- ⁶ How fair and pleasant you are,
O loved one, delectable maiden!^r
- ⁷ You are stately^s as a palm tree,
and your breasts are like its clusters.
- ⁸ I say I will climb the palm tree
and lay hold of its branches.
Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
and the scent of your breath like apples,
⁹ and your kisses^t like the best wine
that goes down^u smoothly,
gliding over lips and teeth.^v
- ¹⁰ I am my beloved's,
and his desire is for me.
- ¹¹ Come, my beloved,
let us go forth into the fields,
and lodge in the villages;
- ¹² let us go out early to the vineyards,
and see whether the vines have budded,
whether the grape blossoms have opened
and the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.
- ¹³ The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
and over our doors are all choice fruits,
new as well as old,
which I have laid up for you, O my beloved.
- 8** O that you were like a brother to me,
that nursed at my mother's breast!

ⁿ Cn: The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^o Ch 7.1 in Heb

^p Or dance of Mahanaim

^q The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^r Syr: Heb in delights ^s Heb This your stature is

^t Heb palate ^u Heb down for my lover

^v Gk Syr Vg: Heb lips of sleepers

6.11-12: The maiden visits the garden.

6.13-7.9: The maiden called on to dance, and her charms arouse the lover's desire. 6.13: *Shulanmitte*, the meaning of the word is doubtful; it may perhaps mean "bride of Solomon."

7.10-13: The maiden invites her lover to come with her into the fields and promises to give him her love.

- If I met you outside, I would kiss
you,
and none would despise me.
² I would lead you and bring you
into the house of my mother,
and into the chamber of her that
conceived me.^w
I would give you spiced wine to
drink,
the juice of my pomegranates.
³ O that his left hand were under
my head,
and that his right hand embraced
me!
⁴ I adjure you, O daughters of
Jerusalem,
that you stir not up nor awaken
love
until it please.

⁵ Who is that coming up from the
wilderness,
leaning upon her beloved?

Under the apple tree I awakened
you.
There your mother was in travail
with you,
there she who bore you was in
travail.

⁶ Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
jealousy is cruel as the
grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a most vehement flame.
⁷ Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If a man offered for love

all the wealth of his house,
it would be utterly scorned.

- ⁸ We have a little sister,
and she has no breasts.
What shall we do for our sister,
on the day when she is spoken
for?
⁹ If she is a wall,
we will build upon her a
battlement of silver;
but if she is a door,
we will enclose her with boards of
cedar.
¹⁰ I was a wall,
and my breasts were like towers;
then I was in his eyes
as one who brings^x peace.

¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at
Ba'al-ha'mon;
he let out the vineyard to keepers;
each one was to bring for its fruit
a thousand pieces of silver.
¹² My vineyard, my very own, is for
myself;
you, O Solomon, may have the
thousand,
and the keepers of the fruit two
hundred.

¹³ O you who dwell in the gardens,
my companions are listening for
your voice;
let me hear it.

¹⁴ Make haste, my beloved,
and be like a gazelle
or a young stag
upon the mountains of spices.

^w Gk Syr: Heb *mother; she (or you) will teach me*
^x Or *finds*

8.1-4: The maiden wishes to marry her lover. **1:** *Brother*, husband; compare "my sister, my bride" in 4.9.

8.5-7: The lovers return, the maiden imploring her lover to be faithful.

8.8-12: The maiden boasts of her previous chastity.

8.13-14: The lover calls and the maiden answers.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, proclaimed his message to Judah and Jerusalem between 742 and 687 B.C., that critical period in which the Northern Kingdom was annexed to the Assyrian empire (2 Kg. ch. 17) while Judah lived uneasily in its shadow as a tributary (2 Chr. 28:21). Nothing is known about the early life of the prophet, although it has been conjectured from certain aspects of his message and from Is. 6:1–8 that he may have been a priest.

Only chs. 1–39 can be assigned to Isaiah's time; it is generally accepted that chs. 40–66 come from the time of Cyrus of Persia (539 B.C.) and later, as shown by the differences in historical background, literary style, and theological emphases. Isaiah I (chs. 1–39) begins with Isaiah's memoirs (1:1–12:6); it continues with oracles against foreign and domestic enemies (13:1–23:18), followed by the "Isaiah Apocalypse" (24:1–27:13). Oracles generally concerned with Judah's intrigue with Egypt, its implications and consequences (28:1–32:20), are followed by a short collection of post-exilic eschatological oracles (33:1–35:10). An historical appendix (36:1–39:8) completes the pre-exilic section, in which there are other additions and some rearranging of oracles by post-exilic editors.

In the tradition of Amos, Hosea, and Micah, contemporaries whose work he seems to know, Isaiah attacks social injustice as that which is most indicative of Judah's tenuous relationship with God. He exhorts his hearers to place their confidence in their omnipotent God and to lead public and private lives which manifest this. Thus justice and righteousness, teaching and word, and assurance of divine blessing upon the faithful and punishment upon the faithless are recurrent themes in his message from the Holy One of Israel to a proud and stubborn people.

Chapters 40–66, commonly called Second Isaiah (or Second and Third Isaiah), originated immediately before the fall of Babylon (October 29, 539 B.C.) to the armies of Cyrus, king of Persia, and during the generation following. The anonymous author of the first bipartite section (chs. 40–55 [40–48; 49–55]) exults in joyful anticipation of exiled Judah's restoration to Palestine, for which Cyrus is God's precipitating agent (44:28). Second Isaiah emphasizes the significance of historical events in God's plan, a plan which extends from creation to redemption—and beyond. Blindness to God's way is a cardinal sin in Second Isaiah. The author's interest in cosmogony was unique up to his time; it is used to emphasize the concept of God as exclusive creator and lord of all, whose ultimate glorious manifestation will be accompanied by a new creation.

This eschatological hope is shared with the author, or authors, of the second bipartite section (chs. 56–66 [56–59 and 63–66; 60–62]). The contents of this section (sometimes called Third Isaiah) suggest a date between 530 and 510 B.C., perhaps contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah (520–518); chapters 60–62 may be later. Other concepts are also shared. Jacob and Israel have primarily religious, albeit national, significance. God's concern for the exiles in chs. 40–55 is paralleled by his comforting assurance to Zion's afflicted in chs. 56–66. But the direct "I-thou" relationship of Second Isaiah gives way to a more transcendent concept. In chs. 56–66 one is confronted by the sobering realities of life in the restored community. The Servant-motif vanishes, and there is growing emphasis on cultic matters.

Together these theologically significant sections present a moving vision of the assured hope of God's people in a world whose times are in God's hands. God's message to his responsible people is heard today as his covenant community, the church, redeemed by God through Jesus the Suffering Servant incarnate, proclaims to the world, "Arise, shine; for your light has come" (60:1).

THE VISION OF ISAIAH THE SON OF Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzzi'ah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Heze-ki'ah, kings of Judah.

² Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;
for the LORD has spoken:
"Sons have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against me.

³ The ox knows its owner,
and the ass its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people does not understand."

⁴ Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
sons who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the LORD,
they have despised the Holy One
of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.

⁵ Why will you still be smitten,
that you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.

⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the
head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores
and bleeding wounds;
they are not pressed out, or bound
up,
or softened with oil.

⁷ Your country lies desolate,

your cities are burned with fire;
in your very presence
aliens devour your land;
it is desolate, as overthrown by
aliens.

⁸ And the daughter of Zion is left
like a booth in a vineyard,
like a lodge in a cucumber field,
like a besieged city.

⁹ If the LORD of hosts
had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomor'rah.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomor'rah!

¹¹ "What to me is the multitude of your
sacrifices?
says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings
of rams
and the fat of fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of he-goats.

¹² "When you come to appear before
me,
who requires of you
this trampling of my courts?

¹³ Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and sabbath and the
calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and
solemn assembly.

1.1-5.24: Oracles against rebellious Judah. **1.1: Superscription.** *Vision of Isaiah* (6.1-13; Jer. ch. 1; Ezek. chs. 1-3) identifies Is. chs. 1-39 as God's message to Judah through the prophet. The name *Isaiah* means "The LORD [Yahweh] gives salvation." The latter part of the verse beginning with "in the days of" may be an editorial expansion.

1.2-31: First series of oracles, serving as a kind of prologue. **2-3:** Poetic exhortation reminiscent of God's address to the heavenly host in 40.1-2. *Sons* compare Jer.3.19-22. The Biblical word *know* implies a profound, identifying comprehension of the right relationship with God; it is a recurring prophetic theme (Jer.1.5; Hos.2.20; 4.1,6; 5.4). **4-9:** An appeal to a people heedless of the significance of Judah's devastation by Tiglath-Pileser III (734-733 B.C.; 7.1-2) or Sennacherib (701 B.C.; 36.1) and Jerusalem's isolation (*daughter of Zion*, see Jer.4.29-31 n.). **4:** Note the poetic parallelism: *nation, people; offspring, sons*. The expression, *Holy One of Israel* (5.19,24; 10.20; 12.6; 17.7; 29.19; 30.11,12,15; 37.23), emphasizes God's unapproachable separateness, which he has bridged by his gracious election of Israel as his people (Hos.8.1; Jer.3.20). **10-20:** God's pronouncement concerning Judah's religious superficiality (Am.5.21-24; Jer.6.20). Judah may repent and return (Jer.7.5-7); the alternative is destruction (Jer.7.22-34). **10:** *Teaching*, the Hebrew word is "torah," which is frequently translated "law." On *Sodom* and

- ¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me,
I am weary of bearing them.
- ¹⁵ When you spread forth your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.
- ¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your doings
from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
¹⁷ learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
defend the fatherless,
plead for the widow.
- ¹⁸ "Come now, let us reason together,
says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.
- ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;
²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be devoured by the sword;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
- ²¹ How the faithful city
has become a harlot,
she that was full of justice!
Righteousness lodged in her,
but now murderers.
- ²² Your silver has become dross,
your wine mixed with water.
- ²³ Your princes are rebels
and companions of thieves.
Every one loves a bribe
and runs after gifts.
They do not defend the fatherless,
and the widow's cause does not
come to them.
- ²⁴ Therefore the Lord says,
the LORD of hosts,
the Mighty One of Israel:
"Ah, I will vent my wrath on my
enemies,
and avenge myself on my foes.
- ²⁵ I will turn my hand against you
and will smelt away your dross as
with lye
and remove all your alloy.
- ²⁶ And I will restore your judges as at
the first,
and your counselors as at the
beginning.
Afterward you shall be called the
city of righteousness,
the faithful city."
- ²⁷ Zion shall be redeemed by justice,
and those in her who repent, by
righteousness.
- ²⁸ But rebels and sinners shall be
destroyed together,
and those who forsake the LORD
shall be consumed.
- ²⁹ For you shall be ashamed of the
oaks
in which you delighted;
and you shall blush for the gardens
which you have chosen.
- ³⁰ For you shall be like an oak
whose leaf withers,
and like a garden without water.
- ³¹ And the strong shall become tow,
and his work a spark,

Gomorrhah see Gen.18.16–19.28; Jer.23.14; Ezek.16.46–58. **14:** *My soul*, a Hebrew idiom which in this context means "I" (compare Lev.26.11,30). *Burden*, see Jer.23.33–40. **16–17:** Compare Ex.22.21,22; Am.5.6–7. **18:** *Reason*, as one argues a case before a judge (Job 23.7). *White* for holiness (Rev.19.8); *scarlet* for wickedness (garments of Babylon, Rev.17.4). **21–23:** Lamentation over Jerusalem. **21:** *Harlot*, Jer.3.6–10; Ezek. chs. 16 and 23. *Justice* and *righteousness* express Isaiah's ideal for the people of God. **24:** *Mighty one of Israel* recalls Israel's patriarchal traditions (49.26; Gen.49.24; Ps.132.2,5). **25:** *As with lye*, or "thoroughly." **26:** Isaiah frequently uses symbolic names (7.14; 8.1; 9.6; see also Jer.33.16; Ezek.48.35 n.). There will be a new creation; compare Am.9.11; Rev.3.12; 21.1–4. **29–31:** An allegory on Judah's faithlessness based on one of Isaiah's rare references to pagan religious practices; compare 57.5; Jer.2.27; Ezek.6.1–14.

and both of them shall burn together,
with none to quench them.

2 The word which Isaiah the son of
Amoz saw concerning Judah and
Jerusalem.

² It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of
the LORD
shall be established as the highest of
the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,

³ and many peoples shall come,
and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain
of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his
paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from
Jerusalem.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide for many
peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into
plowshares,
and their spears into pruning
hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against
nation,
neither shall they learn war any
more.

⁵ O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD.

⁶ For thou hast rejected thy people,

the house of Jacob,
because they are full of diviners^a
from the east
and of soothsayers like the
Philistines,
and they strike hands with
foreigners.

⁷ Their land is filled with silver and
gold,
and there is no end to their
treasures;
their land is filled with horses,
and there is no end to their
chariots.

⁸ Their land is filled with idols;
they bow down to the work of their
hands,
to what their own fingers have
made.

⁹ So man is humbled,
and men are brought low—
forgive them not!

¹⁰ Enter into the rock,
and hide in the dust
from before the terror of the LORD,
and from the glory of his majesty.

¹¹ The haughty looks of man shall be
brought low,
and the pride of men shall be
humbled;
and the LORD alone will be exalted
in that day.

¹² For the LORD of hosts has a day
against all that is proud and lofty,
against all that is lifted up and
high;^b

¹³ against all the cedars of Lebanon,
lofty and lifted up;

^a Cn: Heb lacks of diviners

^b Cn Compare Gk: Heb low

2.1: Second superscription, perhaps for chs. 2–4. *Word* connotes "message" (Jer.7.1; 11.1). **2–5: The new age**, involving the elevation of Zion, the acknowledgment of the nations, and the age of peace. This oracle (vv. 2–4) is also found in Mic.4.1–4. **3: Law**, i.e. "teaching" (1.10), which is more suitable to the thought of the passage. **4: The age of peace** will follow the judgment of the LORD (compare 5.25; 30.27–28). **5: Compare v. 3**, paraphrased in Mic.4.5.

2.6–22: The day of the LORD. This is probably to be taken as three stanzas, vv. 6–11, 12–17, 18–22. The first two have a similar conclusion (compare vv. 11, 17), and it is suggested that the third ended similarly, for the present v. 22 is missing in the Septuagint and is grammatically corrupt. **6–11: Judgment on idolatry**. **6: Diviners** were forbidden in Israel (Ex.22.18; Lev.20.27; Dt.18.10–11; compare 8.19; 1 Sam.28.8–25; Ezek.13.9). The situation fits Uzziah's reign (2 Kg.15.1–7; 2 Chr. ch. 26). **7: Judah's prosperity** (Dt.17.16–17; 1 Kg.10.14–29). **11: In that day**, the day of the LORD, in which God judges his enemies and manifests his glory, is a recurring prophetic theme (13.6; Am.5.18–20; Jer.17.16–18; Ezek.30.3; Jl.1.15). **12–17: Pride and punish-**

- and against all the oaks of Bashan;
¹⁴ against all the high mountains, and against all the lofty hills;
¹⁵ against every high tower, and against every fortified wall;
¹⁶ against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft.
¹⁷ And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the pride of men shall be brought low; and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
¹⁸ And the idols shall utterly pass away.
¹⁹ And men shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.
²⁰ In that day men will cast forth their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats,
²¹ to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.
²² Turn away from man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?
3 For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water;
² the mighty man and the soldier, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder,
³ the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor and the skilful magician and the expert in charms.
⁴ And I will make boys their princes, and babes shall rule over them.
⁵ And the people will oppress one another, every man his fellow and every man his neighbor; the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the base fellow to the honorable.
⁶ When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying: "You have a mantle; you shall be our leader, and this heap of ruins shall be under your rule";
⁷ in that day he will speak out, saying: "I will not be a healer; in my house there is neither bread nor mantle; you shall not make me leader of the people."
⁸ For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen; because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence.
⁹ Their partiality witnesses against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom, they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil upon themselves.

ment. **13:** *Lebanon, Bashan*, Ezek.27.5-6; Jer.22.20. **16:** *Ships of Tarshish*, the phrase may mean "refinery fleet" (see 1 Kg.10.22 n.; Jer.10.9 n.). **18-22:** Judgment on idolatry. **19:** The innumerable *caves* in Palestine's limestone hills are age-old places of refuge.

3.1-15: Anarchy in Jerusalem. 1-7: Without key men, society breaks down. **1:** *Stay and staff*, everything which supports life, including food and drink (economic resources), and perhaps also the functionaries in vv. 2-3. **2-3:** Offices deemed necessary for the continuity and stability of the state. **4:** The inexperienced and naïve will rule. **5-6:** Civil unrest will become open violence. **8-12:** A commentary on vv. 1-7. Judah's brazen sinfulness and rejection of

- ¹⁰ Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them,
for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds.
- ¹¹ Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him,
for what his hands have done shall be done to him.
- ¹² My people—children are their oppressors,
and women rule over them.
O my people, your leaders mislead you,
and confuse the course of your paths.
- ¹³ The LORD has taken his place to contend,
he stands to judge his people.^d
- ¹⁴ The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people:
“It is you who have devoured the vineyard,
the spoil of the poor is in your houses.
- ¹⁵ What do you mean by crushing my people,
by grinding the face of the poor?”
says the Lord GOD of hosts.

- ¹⁶ The LORD said:
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty
and walk with outstretched necks,
glancing wantonly with their eyes,
mincing along as they go,
tinkling with their feet;
- ¹⁷ the LORD will smite with a scab the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the

headbands, and the crescents; ¹⁹ the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarfs; ²⁰ the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; ²¹ the signet rings and nose rings; ²² the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; ²³ the garments of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.

²⁴ Instead of perfume there will be rotteness;
and instead of a girdle, a rope;
and instead of well-set hair, baldness;
and instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;
instead of beauty, shame.^e

²⁵ Your men shall fall by the sword
and your mighty men in battle.

²⁶ And her gates shall lament and mourn;
ravaged, she shall sit upon the ground.

4 And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying,
“We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach.”

2 In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel.

³ And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, every one who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, ⁴ when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. ⁵ Then the LORD will cre-

^d Gk Syr: Heb judge peoples

^e One ancient Ms: Heb lacks shame

God's leadership has ruined the people. **13–15:** God will judge the corrupt judges. *Elders*, primary administrators of justice (Ex.19.7; Jos.20.4; Dt.21.19–21). *Princes*, royal appointees (1 Kg.4.2; 2 Kg.10.1; Jer.34.19). *Vineyard*, see 5.1–7.

3.16–4.1: The humiliation of Jerusalem's women (Am.4.1–3). **18–24:** Detailed expansion of v. 17. **3.25–4.1:** War's decimation of the male population forces the women to resort to desperate measures to preserve themselves and their self-respect. *Our reproach* summarizes 3.16–4.1.

4.2–6: Jerusalem's restoration. **2:** *Branch*, the righteous remnant (3.10; compare the Messiah as Branch in 11.1; Jer.23.5); *fruit of the land*, a “return to paradise.” **3:** *Recorded for life*, com-

ate over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion. ⁶ It will be for a shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

5 Let me sing for my beloved a love song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

² He digged it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

⁶ I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry!

⁸ Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.

⁹ The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing: "Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.

¹⁰ For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah."

¹¹ Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening till wine inflames them!

pare Ex.32.32; Mal.3.16; Dan.12.1; Rev.20.12,15. **5:** *Smoke and flaming fire*, the signs of God's presence among his people at the Exodus (Ex.13.21-22; 40.34-38).

5.1-7: *Song of the vineyard* (Hos.10.1; Jer.2.21; Ezek.19.10-14), an allegory. This unique didactic poem may have been composed for a celebration of the feast of tabernacles during Jotham's reign, the prophet imitating a vintage festival song. **1a:** Introduction to the poem. **2:** *Choice vines*, the Hebrew word ("soreq") means either red grapes, or grapes native to the valley of Sorek, west of Jerusalem. **3-4:** Judah's only possible answer would be judgment against the vineyard. Judah is asked to pass judgment on herself, much as Nathan through a parable had David pass judgment on himself (2 Sam.12.1-12). **7:** *Justice*, the faithful application of God's will to daily living. *Righteousness*, the living, dynamic relationship between man and God wherein man is spiritually and morally acceptable to God (1.27; 9.7; 16.5; 28.17). Righteousness and justice are naturally coupled (1.21) and grow out of the covenant relationship, the existence of which is assumed (Ex. chs. 19-20). *A cry*, from the oppressed.

5.8-23: *Six reproaches* (vv. 8,11,18,20,21,22; perhaps 10.1-4 is a seventh). Compare Am.5.7, 18; 6.1; Jer.22.13. **8-10:** Against covetousness (Mic.2.1-5,8-9; Ex.20.17). *Bath, ephah*, 6.07

- ¹² They have lyre and harp,
timbrel and flute and wine at their
feasts;
but they do not regard the deeds of
the LORD,
or see the work of his hands.
- ¹³ Therefore my people go into exile
for want of knowledge;
their honored men are dying of
hunger,
and their multitude is parched with
thirst.
- ¹⁴ Therefore Sheol has enlarged its
appetite
and opened its mouth beyond
measure,
and the nobility of Jerusalem/ and
her multitude go down,
her throng and he who exults in
her.
- ¹⁵ Man is bowed down, and men are
brought low,
and the eyes of the haughty are
humbled.
- ¹⁶ But the LORD of hosts is exalted in
justice,
and the Holy God shows
himself holy in righteousness.
- ¹⁷ Then shall the lambs graze as in
their pasture,
fatlings and kids^s shall feed among
the ruins.
- ¹⁸ Woe to those who draw iniquity
with cords of falsehood,
who draw sin as with cart ropes,
- ¹⁹ who say: "Let him make haste,
let him speed his work
that we may see it;
let the purpose of the Holy One of
Israel draw near,
and let it come, that we may know
it!"
- ²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
- who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter!
- ²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their
own eyes,
and shrewd in their own sight!
- ²² Woe to those who are heroes at
drinking wine,
and valiant men in mixing strong
drink,
- ²³ who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of his
right!
- ²⁴ Therefore, as the tongue of fire
devours the stubble,
and as dry grass sinks down in the
flame,
so their root will be as rottenness,
and their blossom go up like dust;
for they have rejected the law of the
LORD of hosts,
and have despised the word of
the Holy One of Israel.
- ²⁵ Therefore the anger of the LORD
was kindled against his people,
and he stretched out his hand
against them and smote them,
and the mountains quaked;
and their corpses were as refuse
in the midst of the streets.
For all this his anger is not turned
away
and his hand is stretched out still.
- ²⁶ He will raise a signal for a nation
afar off,
and whistle for it from the ends of
the earth;
and lo, swiftly, speedily it comes!
- ²⁷ None is weary, none stumbles,
none slumbers or sleeps,
not a waistcloth is loose,
not a sandal-thong broken;

f Heb *her nobility* *g* Cn Compare Gk: Heb *aliens*

gallons; *homer*, 6.5 bushels (see Ezek.45.11 n.). **11-12:** Against carousing (Am.6.4-6). **13-17:** *Knowledge*, 1.3. The severity of Judah's punishment will require the enlargement of *Sheol* (the underworld, 14.9-18). **16:** In all he does, God is just and right. **18-19:** Against mocking God. **20:** Against moral depravity (32.5; Pr.17.15). **21:** Against conceit. **22-23:** Against bravado and bribery. **24b-30:** These verses should probably follow 10.4 (see 9.8-10.4 n.). *Law*, here also in the sense of "teaching" (see 1.10 n.). The Assyrians (*a nation afar off*; Jer.5.15, referring to Babylon) will be the executors of God's judgment.

²⁸ their arrows are sharp,
all their bows bent,
their horses' hoofs seem like flint,
and their wheels like the
whirlwind.

²⁹ Their roaring is like a lion,
like young lions they roar;
they growl and seize their prey,
they carry it off, and none can
rescue.

³⁰ They will growl over it on that day,
like the roaring of the sea.
And if one look to the land,
behold, darkness and distress;
and the light is darkened by its
clouds.

6 In the year that King Uzzi'ah died
I saw the Lord sitting upon a
throne, high and lifted up; and his
train filled the temple. ² Above him
stood the seraphim; each had six
wings: with two he covered his face,
and with two he covered his feet, and
with two he flew. ³ And one called
to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of
hosts;

the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds
shook at the voice of him who called,
and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am
lost; for I am a man of unclean lips,
and I dwell in the midst of a people of
unclean lips; for my eyes have seen
the King, the LORD of hosts!"

⁶ Then flew one of the seraphim to
me, having in his hand a burning coal
which he had taken with tongs from
the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth,

and said: "Behold, this has touched
your lips; your guilt is taken away, and
your sin forgiven." ⁸ And I heard the
voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall
I send, and who will go for us?" Then
I said, "Here am I! Send me." ⁹ And
he said, "Go, and say to this people:

'Hear and hear, but do not
understand;

see and see, but do not perceive.'

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people fat,
and their ears heavy,
and shut their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed."

¹¹ Then I said, "How long, O Lord?"
And he said:

"Until cities lie waste
without inhabitant,
and houses without men,
and the land is utterly desolate,

¹² and the LORD removes men far
away,

and the forsaken places are many
in the midst of the land.

¹³ And though a tenth remain in it,
it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak,
whose stump remains standing
when it is felled."

The holy seed is its stump.

7 In the days of Ahaz the son of
Jotham, son of Uzzi'ah, king of
Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pe-
kah the son of Remali'ah the king of
Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage
war against it, but they could not con-
quer it. ² When the house of David

6.1-13: The call of Isaiah. God's appearance is described in the setting of the Jerusalem temple (compare the description of the enthroned deity in 1 Kg.22.19-23; Ezek.1.4-2.1). **1:** Year, 742 B.C. *Throne*, ark of the covenant. **2: Seraphim**, possibly griffin-like creatures; compare the cherubim, also associated with the glory of the Lord (Ezek. ch. 1). **3: Thrice-holy** for emphasis (Jer.7.4). **5:** Before the holy God, sinful man cannot stand (Ex.33.18-20). **6-8:** Cleansed by God's forgiving act, Isaiah may now speak for God. **9-12:** Compare Jer.1 10,13-19. Verses 9b-10 are quoted in Mt.13.10-15; compare Mk.4.12; Lk.8.10; Jn.12.39-41; Acts 28.26-27. **13:** The last part of the verse is obscure and textually corrupt and perhaps should be restored to read, "... like the terebinth [of the goddess] and the oak of Asherah, cast out with the pillar of the high places," that is, like the destroyed furnishings of a pagan high place.

7.1-8.15: Isaiah and the Syro-Ephraimite War (734-733 B.C.). For the historical background see 2 Kg.16.1-20. **1-9:** Sign of Shear-jashub. **2:** The continuation of the Davidic monarchy was

was told, "Syria is in league with E'phraim," his heart and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.

3 And the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go forth to meet Ahaz, you and She'ar-jash'ub^h your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Fuller's Field, ⁴ and say to him, 'Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remali'ah. ⁵ Because Syria, with E'phraim and the son of Remali'ah, has devised evil against you, saying, ⁶ "Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Ta'be-el as king in the midst of it," ⁷ thus says the Lord God:

It shall not stand,
and it shall not come to pass.

⁸ For the head of Syria is Damascus,
and the head of Damascus is
Rezin.

(Within sixty-five years E'phraim will be broken to pieces so that it will no longer be a people.)

⁹ And the head of E'phraim is

Sama'ria,
and the head of Sama'ria is the
son of Remali'ah.

If you will not believe,
surely you shall not be
established.' "

10 Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz,
¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you

to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young womanⁱ shall conceive and bearⁱ a son, and shall call his name Imman'u-el.^k ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. ¹⁷ The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that E'phraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria."

18 In that day the LORD will whistle for the fly which is at the sources of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee which is in the land of Assyria. ¹⁹ And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures.

20 In that day the Lord will shave with a razor which is hired beyond the River—with the king of Assyria—the head and the hair of the feet, and it will sweep away the beard also.

21 In that day a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep; ²² and because of the abundance of milk which they give, he will eat curds; for every one that is left in the land will eat curds and honey.

23 In that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become briers and thorns. ²⁴ With bow and arrows men will come there,

^h That is *A remnant shall return* ⁱ Or *virgin*
^j Or *is with child and shall bear*
^k That is *God is with us*

threatened (see v. 6). 3: *Shear-jashub*, "A remnant shall return"; assuming the worst eventuality, God's promise to David (2 Sam.7.8–16) will be preserved in the remnant (10.20–23). *Upper pool*, reservoir south of the Pool of Siloam. 5: *Son of Tabeel*, perhaps a prince of Judah whose mother came from Tabeel, a region of northern Transjordan. 8–9a: The text and meaning are unclear.

7.10–17: Sign of Immanuel. 13: This expresses Isaiah's impatience. 14: The sign is *Immanuel*, "God with us"; a second (compare vv. 3–9) assurance to the frightened, wavering Ahaz. *Young woman*, Hebrew *'almah*, feminine of *'elem*, young man (1 Sam.17.56; 20.22); the word appears in Gen.24.43; Ex.2.8; Ps.68.25, and elsewhere, where it is translated "young woman," "girl," "maiden." 15: *Curds, honey*, simple foods suggesting difficult times; *good and evil*, age of moral discrimination. 18–25: Four threats amplifying v. 17. 20: *Feet*, see Ex.4.25 n.

for all the land will be briers and thorns;²⁵ and as for all the hills which used to be hoed with a hoe, you will not come there for fear of briers and thorns; but they will become a place where cattle are let loose and where sheep tread.

8 Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet and write upon it in common characters, 'Belonging to Ma'her-shal'al-hash-baz.'"¹ ² And I got reliable witnesses, Uri'ah the priest and Zechari'ah the son of Jeberechi'ah, to attest for me. ³ And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Ma'her-shal'al-hash-baz;⁴ for before the child knows how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Sama'ria will be carried away before the king of Assyria."

5 The LORD spoke to me again: ⁶ "Because this people have refused the waters of Shilo'ah that flow gently, and melt in fear before^m Rezin and the son of Remali'ah; ⁷ therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory; and it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks; ⁸ and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Imman'u-el."

⁹ Be broken, you peoples, and be dismayed;
give ear, all you far countries;
gird yourselves and be dismayed;

gird yourselves and be dismayed.

¹⁰ Take counsel together, but it will come to nought;
speak a word, but it will not stand,
for God is with us.^x

¹¹ For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: ¹² "Do not call conspiracy all that this people call conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. ¹³ But the LORD of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. ¹⁴ And he will become a sanctuary, and a stone of offense, and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And many shall stumble thereon; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."

¹⁶ Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples. ¹⁷ I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. ¹⁸ Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. ¹⁹ And when they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the teaching and to the testimony! Surely for this word which they speak there is no dawn. ²¹ They will pass through the land,ⁿ greatly distressed and hungry; and when they are hungry, they will be enraged and

¹ That is *The spoil speeds, the prey hastes*

^m Cf: Heb *rejoices in*

^x Heb *immanu el* ⁿ Heb *it*

8.1-4: The sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz, "The spoil speeds, the prey hastes"; Isaiah's third assurance to Ahaz. 1: *Tablet*, of wood. 2: *Uriah*, 2 Kg.16.10-16. *Zechariah*, perhaps Ahaz's father-in-law (2 Kg.18.2). 3: *Prophetess*, Isaiah's wife. 5-8: Oracle of Shiloah and the Euphrates; Judah also is included in Assyria's sweep. *Shiloah*, a conduit flanking Ophel from the spring Gihon (see 1 Kg.1.33 n.) to the reservoir (7.3), is contrasted with the *River*, the great Euphrates. Ahaz's mighty ally, Assyria, will inundate tiny Judah, God's people. 9-10: God is with his people (see 7.14 n.) to deliver them (Ps. 46, esp. vv. 7,11).

8.11-22: The testimony and the teaching. 11-15: "Man proposes-God disposes" (Pr.16.9). 16: *Bind, seal*, as one binds and seals a scroll (Jer.32.10). 18: *Signs*, 7.3; 7.14; 8.1. 19-20: Condemnation of superstition (2.6). For necromancy (consultation of the dead), see 1 Sam.28.7

will curse^o their king and their God, and turn their faces upward; ²² and they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be thrust into thick darkness.

^{9p} But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zeb'ulun and the land of Naph'tali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

^{2a} The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

³ Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy; they rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Mid'ian.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called

“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

⁸ The Lord has sent a word against Jacob,

and it will light upon Israel;

⁹ and all the people will know, E'phraim and the inhabitants of Sama'ria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart:

¹⁰ “The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones;

the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.”

¹¹ So the LORD raises adversaries^r against them, and stirs up their enemies.

¹² The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is stretched out still.

^o Or curse by

^p Ch 8.23 in Heb

^q Ch 9.1 in Heb

^r Cn: Heb the adversaries of Rezin

n. 9.1: Transitional verse from doom to promise. *Zebulun*, *Naphtali*, and Issachar constituted later *Galilee*. *Way of the sea*, the highway from Damascus to the sea, probable route of the Assyrian invasion in 733–732 B.C. (2 Kg.15.29).

9.2–7: The messianic king (compare 11.1–9). Filled with borrowed phrases referring to the Davidic monarchy, this passage may have originally celebrated the accession of a Judean king, perhaps Hezekiah; in its present context it describes the coming Messiah as the ideal king. 4: *Midian*, Jg.7.15–25. 6: *Government*, symbol of authority. *Mighty God*, divine in might. *Everlasting Father*, continuing fatherly love and care. *Prince of Peace*, the king who brings peace and prosperity. The king represents the best qualities of Israel's heroes (Ezek.37.25).

9.8–10.4: Ephraim's judgment an object lesson for Judah (five stanzas, including 5.24b–30; with the same refrain, 9.12,17,21; 10.4; 5.25; compare Jer.3.6–10; Ezek.16.44–58). 8–12: Punishment for pride and unrepented wickedness. 8: *Word*, more than a statement; it includes the potential and fact of accomplishment (55.10–11; Jer.23.18–20). 10: *Bricks*, *sycamore*, for ordinary houses; *dressed stone*, *cedar* for palaces (Jer.22.7,23). 13–17: Corrupt leaders misled

¹³ The people did not turn to him who smote them,
nor seek the LORD of hosts.
¹⁴ So the LORD cut off from Israel
head and tail,
palm branch and reed in one day—
¹⁵ the elder and honored man is the head,
and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail;
¹⁶ for those who lead this people lead them astray,
and those who are led by them are swallowed up.
¹⁷ Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men,
and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows;
for every one is godless and an evildoer,
and every mouth speaks folly.
For all this his anger is not turned away
and his hand is stretched out still.

¹⁸ For wickedness burns like a fire,
it consumes briars and thorns;
it kindles the thickets of the forest,
and they roll upward in a column of smoke.
¹⁹ Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts
the land is burned,
and the people are like fuel for the fire;
no man spares his brother.
²⁰ They snatch on the right, but are still hungry,
and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied;
each devours his neighbor's^s flesh,
²¹ Manas'seh E'phraim, and E'phraim Manas'seh,
and together they are against Judah.

For all this his anger is not turned away
and his hand is stretched out still.

10 Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees,
and the writers who keep writing oppression,
² to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right,
that widows may be their spoil,
and that they may make the fatherless their prey!
³ What will you do on the day of punishment,
in the storm which will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help,
and where will you leave your wealth?
⁴ Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners
or fall among the slain.
For all this his anger is not turned away
and his hand is stretched out still.

⁵ Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger,
the staff of my fury!
⁶ Against a godless nation I send him,
and against the people of my wrath I command him,
to take spoil and seize plunder,
and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
⁷ But he does not so intend,
and his mind does not so think;
but it is in his mind to destroy,
and to cut off nations not a few;
⁸ for he says:
"Are not my commanders all kings?
⁹ Is not Calno like Car'chemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?"

^s Tg Compare Gk: Heb *the flesh of his arm*
^t Heb *a staff it is in their hand my fury*

their people (Jer.6.14). **18–21:** Moral decay consumes like a forest fire (Hos.7.6); civil war breaks out (2 Kg.15.23–31; 16.5). **20:** *His neighbor's flesh*; the Hebrew consonantal text may be read "the flesh of his offspring" (on cannibalism, see Jer.19.9). Some treat this passage as a proverb. **10.1–4:** Justice is miscarried (3.13–15; Jer.8.8).

10.5–19: Woe, O Assyria! Unaware that he was serving as God's instrument, powerful Assyria was doomed by his pride to destruction (Jer.25.8–14; 50.23). **9:** In northern Syria, Tiglath-Pileser III captured *Calno* (742 B.C.), *Carchemish*, *Hamath* (738), *Arpad* (741), southern

Is not Sama'ria like Damascus?
 10 As my hand has reached to the
 kingdoms of the idols
 whose graven images were greater
 than those of Jerusalem and
 Sama'ria,
 11 shall I not do to Jerusalem and her
 idols
 as I have done to Sama'ria and
 her images?"

12 When the Lord has finished all
 his work on Mount Zion and on Jeru-
 salem he^u will punish the arrogant
 boasting of the king of Assyria and his
 haughty pride. 13 For he says:

"By the strength of my hand I have
 done it,
 and by my wisdom, for I have
 understanding;
 I have removed the boundaries of
 peoples,
 and have plundered their
 treasures;

like a bull I have brought down
 those who sat on thrones.

14 My hand has found like a nest
 the wealth of the peoples;
 and as men gather eggs that have
 been forsaken
 so I have gathered all the earth;
 and there was none that moved a
 wing,
 or opened the mouth, or chirped."

15 Shall the axe vaunt itself over him
 who hews with it,
 or the saw magnify itself against
 him who wields it?
 As if a rod should wield him who
 lifts it,

or as if a staff should lift him who
 is not wood!

16 Therefore the Lord, the LORD of
 hosts,
 will send wasting sickness among
 his stout warriors,
 and under his glory a burning will
 be kindled,
 like the burning of fire.

17 The light of Israel will become a
 fire,
 and his Holy One a flame;
 and it will burn and devour
 his thorns and briars in one day.
 18 The glory of his forest and of his
 fruitful land
 the LORD will destroy, both soul
 and body,
 and it will be as when a sick man
 wastes away.

19 The remnant of the trees of his
 forest will be so few
 that a child can write them down.

20 In that day the remnant of Israel
 and the survivors of the house of Jacob
 will no more lean upon him that smote
 them, but will lean upon the LORD, the
 Holy One of Israel, in truth. 21 A
 remnant will return, the remnant of
 Jacob, to the mighty God. 22 For though
 your people Israel be as the sand of
 the sea, only a remnant of them will
 return. Destruction is decreed, over-
 flowing with righteousness. 23 For the
 Lord, the LORD of hosts, will make a
 full end, as decreed, in the midst of all
 the earth.

24 Therefore thus says the Lord,
 the LORD of hosts: "O my people,
^u Heb I

Syria, *Damascus* (732). Menahem of Israel paid him tribute (2 Kg.15.19–20). 10–11: To Assyria, the LORD was another idol. 12: Prose summation of vv. 5–11,13–19. 13–14: Assyria's boast. *Removed boundaries*, to discourage rebellion, Assyria transplanted subject peoples. 15: Rhetorical question recalling v. 5 (45.9). 16–19: Light of Israel, God's majestic glory (2.10; 29.6; Ezek.1.26–28). God will ravage Assyria like a forest fire.

10.20–23: Only a remnant will return. 21: *A remnant will return*, in Hebrew this is the same as the name of Isaiah's son Shear-jashub; in 7.3–4 it stands in an oracle of encouragement, but here in an oracle of doom. 22: *Sand of the sea* recalls God's oath to the patriarchs (Gen.22.17; compare Rom.9.27). In Isaiah (4.2–3; 6.13; 7.3; 28.5–6; 37.4; 37.31–32; compare Mic.4.7; 5.2–9; Zeph.2.7) *remnant* refers to those remaining after Judah's punishment, from whom a great people will arise. During the Exile the remnant was the deported people (Ezek.6.8–10; Jer.23.3; 31.7), whom God would bring back and make great. After the Exile Jewish faithlessness evoked again the pre-exilic concept (Zech.8.11; Hag.1.12; Zech.14.2).

who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they smite with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. ²⁵ For in a very little while my indignation will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction. ²⁶ And the LORD of hosts will wield against them a scourge, as when he smote Mid'ian at the rock of Oreb; and his rod will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt. ²⁷ And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke will be destroyed from your neck."

He has gone up from Rimmon,^v
²⁸ he has come to Ai'ath;
 he has passed through Migron,
 at Michmash he stores his
 baggage;
²⁹ they have crossed over the pass,
 at Geba they lodge for the night;
 Ramah trembles,
 Gib'e-ah of Saul has fled.
³⁰ Cry aloud, O daughter of Gallim!
 Hearken, O La'ishah!
 Answer her, O An'athoth!
³¹ Madme'nah is in flight,
 the inhabitants of Gebim flee for
 safety.
³² This very day he will halt at Nob,
 he will shake his fist
 at the mount of the daughter of
 Zion,
 the hill of Jerusalem.

³³ Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts
 will lop the boughs with terrifying
 power;
 the great in height will be hewn
 down,

and the lofty will be brought low.
³⁴ He will cut down the thickets of the
 forest with an axe,
 and Lebanon with its majestic
 trees^w will fall.

|| There shall come forth a shoot
 from the stump of Jesse,
 and a branch shall grow out of his
 roots.
² And the Spirit of the LORD shall
 rest upon him,
 the spirit of wisdom and
 understanding,
 the spirit of counsel and might,
 the spirit of knowledge and the
 fear of the LORD.
³ And his delight shall be in the fear
 of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his
 eyes see,
 or decide by what his ears hear;
⁴ but with righteousness he shall
 judge the poor,
 and decide with equity for the
 meek of the earth;
 and he shall smite the earth with the
 rod of his mouth,
 and with the breath of his lips he
 shall slay the wicked.
⁵ Righteousness shall be the girdle of
 his waist,
 and faithfulness the girdle of his
 loins.

⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
 and the leopard shall lie down
 with the kid,
 and the calf and the lion and the
 fatling together,

^v Cn: Heb and his yoke from your neck, and a yoke will
 be destroyed because of fatness
^w Cn Compare Gk Vg: Heb with a majestic one

10.24-27c: Oracle of promise. Oreb, Jg.7.25; rod, Ex.14.16.

10.27d-32: The approach of the Assyrians. The invader (Tiglath-Pileser III or Sennacherib, 1.4-9 n.) approached from the north toward the outskirts of Jerusalem (Jer.6.1-3). This may be a "traditional" description of the northern invasion route; for a southern route, see Mic.1.10-15. 33-34: The LORD, the forester, will cut down Assyria.

11.1-9: The messianic king (compare 9.2-7). For the occasion of the original oracle, see 9.2-7 n. 1-3a: The Messiah will manifest the characteristics of Israel's great men. 1: Jesse, David's father (1 Sam.16.1-20). 2: To these six "Gifts of the Spirit" the Septuagint adds "piety." 3b-5: Wisdom and justice (5.7) were traditionally associated in the ideal king (1 Kg. ch. 3; Ps. 72). 6-8: His reign will be "paradise regained"; the disorder of nature will be restored to its pristine harmony (Ezek.47.1-12). 9: My holy mountain, 65.25; Ezek.20.40.

- and a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall feed;
 their young shall lie down together;
 and the lion shall eat straw like
 the ox.
⁸ The sucking child shall play over
 the hole of the asp,
 and the weaned child shall put his
 hand on the adder's den.
⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy
 in all my holy mountain;
 for the earth shall be full of the
 knowledge of the LORD
 as the waters cover the sea.

10 In that day the root of Jesse shall
 stand as an ensign to the peoples; him
 shall the nations seek, and his dwell-
 ings shall be glorious.

11 In that day the Lord will extend
 his hand yet a second time to recover
 the remnant which is left of his people,
 from Assyria, from Egypt, from Path-
 ros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from
 Shinar, from Hamath, and from the
 coastlands of the sea.

¹² He will raise an ensign for the
 nations,
 and will assemble the outcasts of
 Israel,
 and gather the dispersed of Judah
 from the four corners of the earth.

¹³ The jealousy of E'phraim shall
 depart,
 and those who harass Judah shall
 be cut off;
 E'phraim shall not be jealous of
 Judah,
 and Judah shall not harass
 E'phraim.

¹⁴ But they shall swoop down upon the
 shoulder of the Philistines in
 the west,
 and together they shall plunder

the people of the east.
 They shall put forth their hand
 against Edom and Moab,
 and the Ammonites shall obey
 them.

¹⁵ And the LORD will utterly destroy
 the tongue of the sea of Egypt;
 and will wave his hand over the River
 with his scorching wind,
 and smite it into seven channels
 that men may cross dryshod.

¹⁶ And there will be a highway from
 Assyria
 for the remnant which is left of
 his people,
 as there was for Israel
 when they came up from the land
 of Egypt.

12 You will say in that day:
 "I will give thanks to thee, O
 LORD,
 for though thou wast angry with
 me,
 thy anger turned away,
 and thou didst comfort me.

² "Behold, God is my salvation;
 I will trust, and will not be afraid;
 for the LORD GOD is my strength and
 my song,
 and he has become my salvation."

³ With joy you will draw water from
 the wells of salvation. ⁴ And you will
 say in that day:

"Give thanks to the LORD,
 call upon his name;
 make known his deeds among the
 nations,
 proclaim that his name is exalted.

⁵ "Sing praises to the LORD, for he has
 done gloriously;

11.10-16: The messianic age. 10: *Root* is a person, not the dynasty (v. 1). 11-16: Restored and reunited Israel takes vengeance against her oppressors. The terminology and mood of vv. 11-16 indicate a post-exilic date. 11: *Pathros*, Upper Egypt; *Shinar*, Babylonia; *coastlands*, Aegean seacoast and islands. 12: *Ensign*, here a standard, not a person (v. 10). 15: *The tongue of the sea*, the Red Sea (Ex. ch. 14), *River*, Euphrates.

12.1-6: Two songs conclude Section I of the book of Isaiah. (a) 1-3: Song of deliverance (compare Ps. 116). 1a and 4a are liturgical rubrics. 2b: Ex.15.2; Ps.118.14. (b) 4-6: Song of thanksgiving. *Shout and sing for joy*, compare Zeph.3.14. *In your midst*, God in his temple. *Holy One*, see 1.4.

let this be known* in all the earth.

- ⁶ Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

13 The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

- ² On a bare hill raise a signal,
cry aloud to them;
wave the hand for them to enter
the gates of the nobles.
³ I myself have commanded my
consecrated ones,
have summoned my mighty men
to execute my anger,
my proudly exulting ones.
⁴ Hark, a tumult on the mountains
as of a great multitude!
Hark, an uproar of kingdoms,
of nations gathering together!
The LORD of hosts is mustering
a host for battle.
⁵ They come from a distant land,
from the end of the heavens,
the LORD and the weapons of his
indignation,
to destroy the whole earth.
⁶ Wail, for the day of the LORD is
near;
as destruction from the Almighty
it will come!
⁷ Therefore all hands will be feeble,
and every man's heart will melt,
⁸ and they will be dismayed.
Pangs and agony will seize them;
they will be in anguish like a
woman in travail.
They will look aghast at one another;
their faces will be aflame.

- ⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD comes,
cruel, with wrath and fierce anger,
to make the earth a desolation
and to destroy its sinners from it.

¹⁰ For the stars of the heavens and
their constellations
will not give their light;
the sun will be dark at its rising
and the moon will not shed its
light.

¹¹ I will punish the world for its evil,
and the wicked for their iniquity;
I will put an end to the pride of the
arrogant,
and lay low the haughtiness of the
ruthless.

¹² I will make men more rare than fine
gold,
and mankind than the gold of
Ophir.

¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens
tremble,
and the earth will be shaken out
of its place,
at the wrath of the LORD of hosts
in the day of his fierce anger.

¹⁴ And like a hunted gazelle,
or like sheep with none to gather
them,
every man will turn to his own
people,
and every man will flee to his own
land.

¹⁵ Whoever is found will be thrust
through,
and whoever is caught will fall by
the sword.

¹⁶ Their infants will be dashed in
pieces
before their eyes;
their houses will be plundered
and their wives ravished.

x Or this is made known

13.1–23.18. Oracles against foreign nations (compare Jer. chs. 46–51; Ezek. chs. 25–32); each is introduced by the word “oracle.”

13.1–22: Oracle against Babylon. This is obviously subsequent to Isaiah, when Babylon, whose power is here assumed, superseded Assyria; vv. 17–22 suggest a time after Nebuchadnezzar's death in 562 B.C. **2:** *Gates of the nobles*, perhaps the name of one of Babylon's city gates (Jer.19.2). **3:** *My consecrated ones*, perhaps Persian soldiers serving God's purposes (10.5–6; 45.1–4). **5:** *Distant land*, perhaps Persia. *The whole earth*, the Babylonian empire. **6–16:** The cataclysmic fall of Babylon, attended by portents in the heavens and civil disorder, is seen as the *day of the LORD* (compare 2.11). Before the Exile, the day of the LORD marked the punishment of Israel (Am.8.9–10; Jer.30.5–7); after the Exile, it referred to the punishment of Israel's

- ¹⁷ Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them,
who have no regard for silver
and do not delight in gold.
- ¹⁸ Their bows will slaughter the young men;
they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb;
their eyes will not pity children.
- ¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
the splendor and pride of the Chalde'ans,
will be like Sodom and Gomor'rah
when God overthrew them.
- ²⁰ It will never be inhabited
or dwelt in for all generations;
no Arab will pitch his tent there,
no shepherds will make their flocks
lie down there.
- ²¹ But wild beasts will lie down there,
and its houses will be full of howling creatures;
there ostriches will dwell,
and there satyrs will dance.
- ²² Hyenas will cry in its towers,
and jackals in the pleasant palaces;
its time is close at hand
and its days will not be prolonged.

14 The LORD will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land, and aliens will join them and will cleave to the house of Jacob. ² And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the LORD's land as male and female slaves; they will take captive those who were

their captors, and rule over those who oppressed them.

³ When the LORD has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve, ⁴ you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:

"How the oppressor has ceased,
the insolent fury" ceased!

⁵ The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,
the scepter of rulers,

⁶ that smote the peoples in wrath
with unceasing blows,
that ruled the nations in anger
with unrelenting persecution.

⁷ The whole earth is at rest and quiet;
they break forth into singing.

⁸ The cypresses rejoice at you,
the cedars of Lebanon, saying,
'Since you were laid low,
no hewer comes up against us.'

⁹ Sheol beneath is stirred up
to meet you when you come,
it rouses the shades to greet you,
all who were leaders of the earth;
it raises from their thrones
all who were kings of the nations.

¹⁰ All of them will speak
and say to you:

'You too have become as weak as
we!

You have become like us!'

¹¹ Your pomp is brought down to
Sheol,
the sound of your harps;
maggots are the bed beneath you,
and worms are your covering.

¹² "How you are fallen from heaven,

^y One ancient Ms Compare Gk Syr Vg: The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

oppressors, and was again a day of hope for Israel (Am.5.18). **17-19:** *Medes*, people northwest of Persia who earlier were Babylon's allies against Assyria. **20-22:** Busy Babylon will become a wasteland inhabited only by animals (Jer.50.35-40). *Satyr*, goat demon (34.14; Lev. 17.7).

14.1-2: The return from Exile. *Aliens*, proselytes to Judaism, referred to in post-exilic prophecy (Zech.8.20-22). **3-23:** "How are the mighty fallen!" A dirge against a tyrant; the tyrant may be a king (Nebuchadrezzar?), a nation (Babylon?), or a power (Persia?) whose fall would precede Judah's restoration. **3-4a:** Prose introduction. **4b-8:** After the tyrant's fall, peace settles over the oppressed peoples. **8:** Assyrian and Babylonian kings used great quantities of *cedars* for their palaces. **9-11:** The tyrant joins earlier rulers in *Sheol* (see 5.14-17 n.; Ezek. 32.17-22). **12-15:** From aspirations for divinity (compare Gen.11.4-8), he falls to the anonymity of Sheol. Canaanite mythological background is reflected in *Day Star* and *Dawn* (Hebrew "Helal" and "Shahar," names of deities), *mount of assembly* (of the gods, and located at Jebel

O Day Star, son of Dawn!
 How you are cut down to the ground,
 you who laid the nations low!
¹³ You said in your heart,
 'I will ascend to heaven;
 above the stars of God
 I will set my throne on high;
 I will sit on the mount of assembly
 in the far north;
¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of
 the clouds,
 I will make myself like the Most
 High.'
¹⁵ But you are brought down to Sheol,
 to the depths of the Pit.
¹⁶ Those who see you will stare at you,
 and ponder over you:
 'Is this the man who made the earth
 tremble,
 who shook kingdoms,
¹⁷ who made the world like a desert
 and overthrew its cities,
 who did not let his prisoners go
 home?'
¹⁸ All the kings of the nations lie in
 glory,
 each in his own tomb;
¹⁹ but you are cast out, away from
 your sepulchre,
 like a loathed untimely birth,^z
 clothed with the slain, those pierced
 by the sword,
 who go down to the stones of the
 Pit,
 like a dead body trodden under
 foot.
²⁰ You will not be joined with them
 in burial,
 because you have destroyed your
 land,
 you have slain your people.

"May the descendants of evildoers
 nevermore be named!

²¹ Prepare slaughter for his sons
 because of the guilt of their
 fathers,
 lest they rise and possess the earth,
 and fill the face of the world with
 cities."

²² "I will rise up against them,"
 says the LORD of hosts, "and will cut
 off from Babylon name and remnant,
 offspring and posterity, says the LORD.
²³ And I will make it a possession of
 the hedgehog, and pools of water, and
 I will sweep it with the broom of de-
 struction, says the LORD of hosts."

²⁴ The LORD of hosts has sworn:
 "As I have planned,
 so shall it be,
 and as I have purposed,
 so shall it stand,

²⁵ that I will break the Assyrian in
 my land,
 and upon my mountains trample
 him under foot;
 and his yoke shall depart from
 them,
 and his burden from their
 shoulder."

²⁶ This is the purpose that is purposed
 concerning the whole earth;
 and this is the hand that is stretched
 out
 over all the nations.

²⁷ For the LORD of hosts has purposed,
 and who will annul it?
 His hand is stretched out,
 and who will turn it back?

²⁸ In the year that King Ahaz died
 came this oracle:

²⁹ "Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you,
 that the rod which smote you is
 broken,

^z Cn Compare Tg Symmachus: Heb *a loathed branch*

'Aqra, north of Ugarit), and *Most High*, a title also applied to Baal Shamaim (Lord of Heaven). **15:** *The Pit*, an alternative designation of the underworld (Ezek.31.15-18). **16-19:** He will have no greatness in death. *Untimely birth*, the stillborn received the same fate as other forms of violent death (Ezek.32.17-21). **20-21:** Ignominy and hatred are his fate and heritage. **22-23:** Prose conclusion.

14.24-27: Against Assyria (17.12-14; 30.27-33; 37.22-29); no power on earth can prevent God from accomplishing his purposes. **28-32:** Against Philistia (715 B.C.; Jer. ch. 47; Am.1.6-8). Though momentarily it appears that Philistia is secure, the foe *out of the north* (Jer.1.13-15) will shortly destroy her, too.

- for from the serpent's root will come
 forth an adder,
 and its fruit will be a flying
 serpent.
- ³⁰ And the first-born of the poor will
 feed,
 and the needy lie down in safety;
 but I will kill your root with famine,
 and your remnant I^a will slay.
- ³¹ Wail, O gate; cry, O city;
 melt in fear, O Philistia, all of you!
 For smoke comes out of the north,
 and there is no straggler in his
 ranks."
- ³² What will one answer the messengers
 of the nation?
 "The LORD has founded Zion,
 and in her the afflicted of his
 people find refuge."
- 15** An oracle concerning Moab.
 Because Ar is laid waste in a
 night
 Moab is undone;
 because Kir is laid waste in a night
 Moab is undone.
- ² The daughter of Dibon^b has gone
 up
 to the high places to weep;
 over Nebo and over Med'eba
 Moab wails.
 On every head is baldness,
 every beard is shorn;
³ in the streets they gird on sackcloth;
 on the housetops and in the
 squares
 every one wails and melts in tears.
- ⁴ Heshbon and Ele-a'leh cry out,
 their voice is heard as far as Jahaz;
 therefore the armed men of Moab
 cry aloud;
 his soul trembles.
- ⁵ My heart cries out for Moab;
 his fugitives flee to Zo'ar,
 to Eg'lath-shelish'iyah.
 For at the ascent of Luhith
 they go up weeping;
 on the road to Horona'im
- they raise a cry of destruction;
⁶ the waters of Nimrim
 are a desolation;
 the grass is withered, the new
 growth fails,
 the verdure is no more.
- ⁷ Therefore the abundance they have
 gained
 and what they have laid up
 they carry away
 over the Brook of the Willows.
- ⁸ For a cry has gone
 round the land of Moab;
 the wailing reaches to Eglai'm,
 the wailing reaches to Beer-e'lim.
- ⁹ For the waters of Dibon^c are full of
 blood;
 yet I will bring upon Dibon^c
 even more,
 a lion for those of Moab who
 escape,
 for the remnant of the land.
- 16** They have sent lambs
 to the ruler of the land,
 from Sela, by way of the desert,
 to the mount of the daughter of
 Zion.
- ² Like fluttering birds,
 like scattered nestlings,
 so are the daughters of Moab
 at the fords of the Arnon.
- ³ "Give counsel,
 grant justice;
 make your shade like night
 at the height of noon;
 hide the outcasts,
 betray not the fugitive;
- ⁴ let the outcasts of Moab
 sojourn among you;
 be a refuge to them
 from the destroyer.
 When the oppressor is no more,
 and destruction has ceased,
 and he who tramples under foot
 has vanished from the land,
- ^a One ancient Ms Vg: Heb *he*
^b Cn: Heb *the house and Dibon*
^c One ancient Ms Vg Compare Syr: Heb *Dimon*

15.1-16.14: Against Moab (Ezek.25.8-11; Am.2.1-3). This oracle and Jer. ch. 48 are two recensions of the same elegy over once despised Moab (Gen.19.30-37) lying prostrate under the invader's (probably Assyria) heel (vv. 1-9). **16.1-5:** Moabite refugees, appealing to the mercies of the crown, seek sanctuary in Judah; since the thought seems out of place here, the passage

⁵ then a throne will be established
in steadfast love
and on it will sit in faithfulness
in the tent of David
one who judges and seeks justice
and is swift to do righteousness.”

⁶ We have heard of the pride of
Moab,
how proud he was;
of his arrogance, his pride, and his
insolence—
his boasts are false.

⁷ Therefore let Moab wail,
let every one wail for Moab.
Mourn, utterly stricken,
for the raisin-cakes of
Kir-har'eseth.

⁸ For the fields of Heshbon languish,
and the vine of Sibmah;
the lords of the nations
have struck down its branches,
which reached to Jazer
and strayed to the desert;
its shoots spread abroad
and passed over the sea.

⁹ Therefore I weep with the weeping
of Jazer
for the vine of Sibmah;
I drench you with my tears,
O Heshbon and Ele-a'leh;
for upon your fruit and your harvest
the battle shout has fallen.

¹⁰ And joy and gladness are taken
away
from the fruitful field;
and in the vineyards no songs are
sung,
no shouts are raised;
no treader treads out wine in the
presses;
the vintage shout is hushed.^d

¹¹ Therefore my soul moans like a
lyre for Moab,
and my heart for Kir-he'res.

12 And when Moab presents himself,
when he wearies himself upon the
high place, when he comes to his sanctuary
to pray, he will not prevail.

13 This is the word which the LORD
spoke concerning Moab in the past.
¹⁴ But now the LORD says, “In three
years, like the years of a hireling, the
glory of Moab will be brought into contempt,
in spite of all his great multitude,
and those who survive will be very
few and feeble.”

|| ⁷ An oracle concerning Damascus.
Behold, Damascus will cease to
be a city,
and will become a heap of ruins.

² Her cities will be deserted for
ever;^e
they will be for flocks,
which will lie down, and none will
make them afraid.

³ The fortress will disappear from
E'phraim,
and the kingdom from Damascus;
and the remnant of Syria will be
like the glory of the children of
Israel,

says the LORD of hosts.

⁴ And in that day
the glory of Jacob will be brought
low,
and the fat of his flesh will grow
lean.

⁵ And it shall be as when the reaper
gathers standing grain
and his arm harvests the ears,
and as when one gleanes the ears of
grain
in the Valley of Reph'aim.

⁶ Gleanings will be left in it,
as when an olive tree is beaten—
two or three berries

^d Gk: Heb *I have hushed*

^e Cn Compare Gk: Heb *the cities of Aroer are deserted*

may be an insertion. *Lambs*, a gift; compare earlier tribute Moab paid Judah (2 Kg.3.4). **6-12:** A description of the disaster, especially the destruction of the vineyards (parallel, Jer.48.29-33). *Kir-har'eseth* and *Kir-heres*, the same as Kir, 15.1. **13-14:** In a short time, despite intervening prosperity, Moab will again be devastated.

17.1-6: Against the Syro-Ephraimite alliance (about 734 B.C.—see 2 Kg.16.1-20 n.; Is.7.1-8.4). Two stanzas (1-3,4-6) reaffirm the ultimate defeat of *Damascus* and *Ephraim*. *The glory of . . . Israel* refers to Samaria; *Rephaim*, valley northwest of Jerusalem (2 Sam.5.18).

in the top of the highest bough,
four or five
on the branches of a fruit tree,
says the LORD God of Israel.

7 In that day men will regard their Maker, and their eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel; ⁸ they will not have regard for the altars, the work of their hands, and they will not look to what their own fingers have made, either the Ashe'rim or the altars of incense.

9 In that day their strong cities will be like the deserted places of the Hivites and the Amorites,^f which they deserted because of the children of Israel, and there will be desolation.

¹⁰ For you have forgotten the God of your salvation,
and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge;
therefore, though you plant pleasant plants
and set out slips of an alien god,

¹¹ though you make them grow on the day that you plant them,
and make them blossom in the morning that you sow;
yet the harvest will flee away
in a day of grief and incurable pain.

¹² Ah, the thunder of many peoples,
they thunder like the thundering of the sea!

Ah, the roar of nations,
they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!

¹³ The nations roar like the roaring of many waters,
but he will rebuke them, and they will flee far away,

chased like chaff on the mountains
before the wind
and whirling dust before the storm.

¹⁴ At evening time, behold, terror!
Before morning, they are no more!
This is the portion of those who despoil us,
and the lot of those who plunder us.

18 Ah, land of whirring wings
which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia;

² which sends ambassadors by the Nile,
in vessels of papyrus upon the waters!

Go, you swift messengers,
to a nation, tall and smooth,
to a people feared near and far,
a nation mighty and conquering,
whose land the rivers divide.

³ All you inhabitants of the world,
you who dwell on the earth,
when a signal is raised on the mountains, look!

When a trumpet is blown, hear!

⁴ For thus the LORD said to me:
"I will quietly look from my dwelling
like clear heat in sunshine,
like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."

⁵ For before the harvest, when the blossom is over,
and the flower becomes a ripening grape,
he will cut off the shoots with pruning hooks,
and the spreading branches he will hew away.

⁶ They shall all of them be left

^f Cn Compare Gk: Heb *the wood and the highest bough*

17.7–11: Against idolatry. 7–8: Eventually man will return to God (1.29–31). *Asherim*, cult images of Asherah, e.g. sacred wooden poles (6.13 n.). 9–11: Those who forsake God for idols will be displaced as Israel displaced the *Hivites* and *Amorites*, original inhabitants of Palestine (Dt.7.1). *Plants, slips*, plants dedicated to Tammuz (compare Ezek.8.14–18). **12–14:** The appearance of a potentially destructive storm (perhaps Assyria's onslaught of 701 B.C.) is dispelled by God who defends his people.

18.1–20.6: Concerning Egypt. 18.1–7: **Against Egypt.** The occasion may be Egypt's invitation to participate in an anti-Assyrian plot, about 714 B.C. Using the figure of harvest, Isaiah cautions that since God determines the course of events man must wait. When ready, God will signal the beginning of revolt. *Land the rivers divide*, Egypt divided by the Nile.

to the birds of prey of the
mountains
and to the beasts of the earth.
And the birds of prey will summer
upon them,
and all the beasts of the earth will
winter upon them.

7 At that time gifts will be brought
to the LORD of hosts
from a people tall and smooth,
from a people feared near and far,
a nation mighty and conquering,
whose land the rivers divide,
to Mount Zion, the place of the name
of the LORD of hosts.

19 An oracle concerning Egypt.
Behold, the LORD is riding on a
swift cloud
and comes to Egypt;
and the idols of Egypt will tremble
at his presence,
and the heart of the Egyptians
will melt within them.

2 And I will stir up Egyptians against
Egyptians,
and they will fight, every man
against his brother
and every man against his
neighbor,
city against city, kingdom against
kingdom;

3 and the spirit of the Egyptians within
them will be emptied out,
and I will confound their plans;
and they will consult the idols and
the sorcerers,
and the mediums and the wizards;

4 and I will give over the Egyptians
into the hand of a hard master;
and a fierce king will rule over them,
says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

5 And the waters of the Nile will be
dried up,

and the river will be parched and
dry;

6 and its canals will become foul,
and the branches of Egypt's Nile
will diminish and dry up,
reeds and rushes will rot away.

7 There will be bare places by the Nile,
on the brink of the Nile,
and all that is sown by the Nile will
dry up,

be driven away, and be no more.

8 The fishermen will mourn and
lament,
all who cast hook in the Nile;
and they will languish
who spread nets upon the water.

9 The workers in combed flax will
be in despair,
and the weavers of white cotton.

10 Those who are the pillars of the
land will be crushed,
and all who work for hire will
be grieved.

11 The princes of Zo'an are utterly
foolish;
the wise counselors of Pharaoh
give stupid counsel.
How can you say to Pharaoh,
"I am a son of the wise,
a son of ancient kings"?

12 Where then are your wise men?
Let them tell you and make
known
what the LORD of hosts has
purposed against Egypt.

13 The princes of Zo'an have become
fools,
and the princes of Memphis are
deluded;
those who are the cornerstones of
her tribes
have led Egypt astray.

14 The LORD has mingled within her
a spirit of confusion;
and they have made Egypt stagger
in all her doings

19.1-15: Against Egypt (compare Ezek. chs. 29-32). 1-4: God's judgment is seen in civil turbulence, perhaps that which came with the transition to the Twenty-fifth (Ethiopian) Dynasty, begun about 714 B.C. by Piankhi (the *hard master* of v. 4; it may also refer to Assyria). 5-10: The Nile, Egypt's lifeline, will dry up, destroying her economy. Man has no control over natural catastrophes. 11-15: Isaiah taunts Egypt; if she, with her vaunted wisdom, can devise schemes effecting national destinies, how could she have overlooked God's plan for herself? For Zoan

as a drunken man staggers in his vomit.

¹⁵ And there will be nothing for Egypt which head or tail, palm branch or reed, may do.

¹⁶ In that day the Egyptians will be like women, and tremble with fear before the hand which the LORD of hosts shakes over them. ¹⁷ And the land of Judah will become a terror to the Egyptians; every one to whom it is mentioned will fear because of the purpose which the LORD of hosts has purposed against them.

¹⁸ In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt which speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD of hosts. One of these will be called the City of the Sun.

¹⁹ In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. ²⁰ It will be a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; when they cry to the LORD because of oppressors he will send them a savior, and will defend and deliver them. ²¹ And the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians; and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day and worship with sacrifice and burnt offering, and they will make vows to the LORD and perform them. ²² And the LORD will smite Egypt, smiting and healing, and they will return to the LORD, and he will heed their supplications and heal them.

²³ In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the

Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.

²⁴ In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, ²⁵ whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage."

20 In the year that the commander in chief, who was sent by Sargon the king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and fought against it and took it,—² at that time the LORD had spoken by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and loose the sackcloth from your loins and take off your shoes from your feet," and he had done so, walking naked and barefoot—³ the LORD said, "As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Ethiopia, ⁴ so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians captives and the Ethiopians exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. ⁵ Then they shall be dismayed and confounded because of Ethiopia their hope and of Egypt their boast. ⁶ And the inhabitants of this coastland will say in that day, 'Behold, this is what has happened to those in whom we hoped and to whom we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria! And we, how shall we escape?'"

21 The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea.

and Memphis see Ezek.30.13–19 n. *Palm and reed* represent rulers and the ruled (9.14). **16–25:** *Conversion of Egypt and Assyria* (five paragraphs, each beginning with *In that day*). **16–17:** A later nationalistic paragraph emphasizing Judah's (and God's) eventual overthrow of Egypt (v. 12). **18:** *Language of Canaan*, Jewish settlements in Egypt from the early sixth century on are known (Jer.44.1). *City of the sun*, identification uncertain (compare Jer.43.13); there were temples to the LORD at Elephantine and Leontopolis in Egypt. **19–22:** Egyptian proselytes will be treated as Israel, with punishment and mercy (*smiting and healing*). **23,24–25:** Israel will become the mediator and blessing for the nations (Gen.12.3).

20.1–6: *Against Egypt*. Egypt failed to defend a co-conspirator, *Ashdod*, against Sargon's devastating attack, 711 B.C. Isaiah, naked like a prisoner, warns Egypt of its approaching captivity. **2:** Apparently *sackcloth* was customarily worn by prophets (2 Kg.1.8; Zech.13.4–6).

21.1–10: *Against Babylon* (13.1). **1:** Perhaps emend to read, "Words like whirlwinds sweeping

As whirlwinds in the Negeb sweep
on,
it comes from the desert,
from a terrible land.
² A stern vision is told to me;
the plunderer plunders,
and the destroyer destroys.
Go up, O Elam,
lay siege, O Media;
all the sighing she has caused
I bring to an end.
³ Therefore my loins are filled with
anguish;
pangs have seized me,
like the pangs of a woman in
travail;
I am bowed down so that I cannot
hear,
I am dismayed so that I cannot
see.
⁴ My mind reels, horror has appalled
me;
the twilight I longed for
has been turned for me into
trembling.
⁵ They prepare the table,
they spread the rugs,
they eat, they drink.
Arise, O princes,
oil the shield!
⁶ For thus the Lord said to me:
"Go, set a watchman,
let him announce what he sees.
⁷ When he sees riders, horsemen in
pairs,
riders on asses, riders on camels,
let him listen diligently,
very diligently."
⁸ Then he who saw^g cried:
"Upon a watchtower I stand, O
Lord,
continually by day,
and at my post I am stationed
whole nights.

Oracles against Babylon, Edom, Arabia

⁹ And, behold, here come riders,
horsemen in pairs!"
And he answered,
"Fallen, fallen is Babylon;
and all the images of her gods
he has shattered to the ground."
¹⁰ O my threshed and winnowed one,
what I have heard from the LORD
of hosts,
the God of Israel, I announce to
you.
¹¹ The oracle concerning Dumah.
One is calling to me from Se'ir,
"Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?"
¹² The watchman says:
"Morning comes, and also the night.
If you will inquire, inquire;
come back again."
¹³ The oracle concerning Arabia.
In the thickets in Arabia you will
lodge,
O caravans of De'danites.
¹⁴ To the thirsty bring water,
meet the fugitive with bread,
O inhabitants of the land of
Tema.
¹⁵ For they have fled from the swords,
from the drawn sword,
from the bent bow,
and from the press of battle.
¹⁶ For thus the Lord said to me,
"Within a year, according to the years
of a hireling, all the glory of Kedar will
come to an end; ¹⁷ and the remainder
of the archers of the mighty men of the
sons of Kedar will be few; for the
LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken."

22 The oracle concerning the val-
ley of vision.

^g One ancient Ms: Heb *a lion*

through the Negeb, coming from the desert . . ." *Negeb*, southern Palestine. 2-5: Prepare for the attack! *Elam*, Jer.49.34-39. *Media* aided Persia against Babylon (13.17-19). *Oil the shield*, to preserve the leather's suppleness. 6-10: The prophet (*a watchman*; Ezek.3.17) awaits the news of Babylon's fall (Jer.51.33; Rev.18.2). 9: *Ground*, underworld (see Jer.17.12,13 n.).

21.11-12: Concerning Edom, who shared Ashdod's fate (20.1). The prophet suggests a time of deliverance (*morning*) followed by renewed oppression (*night*). *Dumah*, a town in Arabia; the word also means "silence" and here may be a symbolic name for Edom (*Seir*, Gen.32.3).

21.13-17: Concerning Arabia. *Dedan* in northern Arabia (Ezek.25.13); *Tema* an oasis in northwestern Arabia (Jer.25.23); *Kedar* in northern Arabia, apparently the aggressor (Jer.49.28).

What do you mean that you have gone up,
 all of you, to the housetops,
² you who are full of shoutings,
 tumultuous city, exultant town?
 Your slain are not slain with the sword
 or dead in battle.
³ All your rulers have fled together,
 without the bow they were captured.
 All of you who were found were captured,
 though they had fled far away.^h
⁴ Therefore I said:
 "Look away from me,
 let me weep bitter tears;
 do not labor to comfort me
 for the destruction of the daughter
 of my people."
⁵ For the Lord GOD of hosts has a day
 of tumult and trampling and confusion
 in the valley of vision,
 a battering down of walls
 and a shouting to the mountains.
⁶ And Elam bore the quiver
 with chariots and horsemen,ⁱ
 and Kir uncovered the shield.
⁷ Your choicest valleys were full of
 chariots,
 and the horsemen took their stand
 at the gates.
⁸ He has taken away the covering of
 Judah.

In that day you looked to the
 weapons of the House of the Forest,

⁹ and you saw that the breaches of
 the city of David were many, and you
 collected the waters of the lower pool,
¹⁰ and you counted the houses of Jerusalem,
 and you broke down the houses
 to fortify the wall. ¹¹ You made a reservoir
 between the two walls for the water
 of the old pool. But you did not look
 to him who did it, or have regard
 for him who planned it long ago.

¹² In that day the Lord GOD of hosts
 called to weeping and mourning,
 to baldness and girding with sackcloth;

¹³ and behold, joy and gladness,
 slaying oxen and killing sheep,
 eating flesh and drinking wine.

"Let us eat and drink,
 for tomorrow we die."

¹⁴ The LORD of hosts has revealed
 himself in my ears:

"Surely this iniquity will not be
 forgiven you
 till you die."

says the Lord GOD of hosts.

¹⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD of
 hosts, "Come, go to this steward, to
 Shebna, who is over the household,
 and say to him: ¹⁶ What have you to
 do here and whom have you here, that
 you have hewn here a tomb for yourself,
 you who hew a tomb on the height,
 and carve a habitation for yourself
 in the rock? ¹⁷ Behold, the LORD
 will hurl you away violently, O

^h Gk Syr Vg: Heb *from far away*
ⁱ The Hebrew of this line is obscure

22.1-14: Warning to Jerusalem of approaching destruction. The occasion may have been Sargon's expedition of 711 B.C. (20.1), which by-passed Judah, or the period of civil strife in Assyria following Sargon's death (705 B.C.). **1:** *Valley of vision*, the title is taken from v. 5 and the reference perhaps to the valley of Hinnom (compare Jer.7.30-34; 32.35). **4:** *Daughter of my people*, Jerusalem. **5-8a:** The *day* of the Lord GOD is described as a day of invasion (2.11; 13.6). *Elam* (21.2) and *Kir* (identification uncertain), mercenaries in Assyria's army. *Choicest valleys*, such as Valley of Rephaim and the King's Valley (17.5; 2 Sam.18.18). **8b-11:** Military preparedness does not replace faithfulness to God. *House*, the royal palace (Jer.22.13-14). *The city of David* was the oldest (southeastern) section of Jerusalem (2 Sam.5.7). *Collected the waters* may refer to the excavation of Hezekiah's tunnel (2 Kg.20.20; 2 Chr.32.3-5). **12-14:** The words of the revelers are turned against them (5.11-12).

22.15-25: Against Shebna (Jer.20.1-6). Hezekiah's major-domo apparently arrogated improper status to himself, and may have been an instigator in the anti-Assyrian plot preceding 711 B.C. (18.1-7 n.). Verses 24-25 suggest that Eliakim (36.3), a welcome replacement, failed to fulfil expectations.

you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you,¹⁸ and whirl you round and round, and throw you like a ball into a wide land; there you shall die, and there shall be your splendid chariots, you shame of your master's house.¹⁹ I will thrust you from your office, and you will be cast down from your station.²⁰ In that day I will call my servant Eli'akim the son of Hilki'ah,²¹ and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your girdle on him, and will commit your authority to his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.²² And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.²³ And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house.²⁴ And they will hang on him the whole weight of his father's house, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons.²⁵ In that day, says the LORD of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a sure place will give way; and it will be cut down and fall, and the burden that was upon it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken."

23 The oracle concerning Tyre.

Wail, O ships of Tarshish,
for Tyre is laid waste, without
house or haven!

From the land of Cyprus
it is revealed to them.

² Be still, O inhabitants of the coast,
O merchants of Sidon;
your messengers passed over the sea/

³ and were on many waters;
your revenue was the grain of
Shihor,
the harvest of the Nile;
you were the merchant of the
nations.

⁴ Be ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea
has spoken,
the stronghold of the sea, saying:
"I have neither travailed nor given
birth,

I have neither reared young men
nor brought up virgins."

⁵ When the report comes to Egypt,
they will be in anguish over the
report about Tyre.

⁶ Pass over to Tarshish,
wail, O inhabitants of the coast!

⁷ Is this your exultant city
whose origin is from days of old,
whose feet carried her
to settle afar?

⁸ Who has purposed this
against Tyre, the bestower of
crowns,
whose merchants were princes,
whose traders were the honored of
the earth?

⁹ The LORD of hosts has purposed it,
to defile the pride of all glory,
to dishonor all the honored of the
earth.

¹⁰ Overflow your land like the Nile,
O daughter of Tarshish;
there is no restraint any more.

¹¹ He has stretched out his hand over
the sea,
he has shaken the kingdoms;
the LORD has given command
concerning Canaan
to destroy its strongholds.

¹² And he said:
"You will no more exult,
O oppressed virgin daughter of
Sidon;
arise, pass over to Cyprus,
even there you will have no rest."

¹³ Behold the land of the Chal-
de'ans! This is the people; it was not
Assyria. They destined Tyre for wild
beasts. They erected their siege towers,

j One ancient Ms: Heb who passed over the sea, they
replenished you

23.1-18: The oracle concerning Sidon (vv. 1-4, 12-14) is combined with a later one against Tyre (vv. 5-11, 15-18). **1a:** Superscription for the chapter. **1b-c:** *Tarshish*, see Jer. 10.9 n. There were Phoenician colonies in *Cyprus*. **3:** *Shihor*, the "waters of Horus," near Zoan. **4:** Ruined Sidon is barren like the sea without sailors (*young men*). **5-11:** Fallen Tyre's commercial empire

they razed her palaces, they made her a ruin.^k

¹⁴ Wail, O ships of Tarshish,
for your stronghold is laid waste.

¹⁵ In that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot:

¹⁶ "Take a harp,
go about the city,
O forgotten harlot!
Make sweet melody,
sing many songs,
that you may be remembered."

¹⁷ At the end of seventy years, the LORD will visit Tyre, and she will return to her hire, and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. ¹⁸ Her merchandise and her hire will be dedicated to the LORD; it will not be stored or hoarded, but her merchandise will supply abundant food and fine clothing for those who dwell before the LORD.

24 Behold, the LORD will lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.

² And it shall be, as with the people,
so with the priest;
as with the slave, so with his master;
as with the maid, so with her mistress;

as with the buyer, so with the seller;
as with the lender, so with the borrower;
as with the creditor, so with the debtor.

³ The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled;
for the LORD has spoken this word.

⁴ The earth mourns and withers,
the world languishes and withers;
the heavens languish together with the earth.

⁵ The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed the laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.

⁶ Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched,
and few men are left.

⁷ The wine mourns,
the vine languishes,
all the merry-hearted sigh.

⁸ The mirth of the timbrels is stilled,
the noise of the jubilant has ceased,
the mirth of the lyre is stilled.

⁹ No more do they drink wine with singing;
strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

^k The Hebrew of this verse is obscure

reacts with alarm. With this section compare Ezek. ch. 26; 27.1-9, 25-36; ch. 28. **15-18:** A very late addition (perhaps third century); compare the restoration in the late oracles in Jer. 48.47; 49.6, 39. *Seventy years*, Jer. 25.11. **17:** *Play the harlot*, do anything for gain. **18:** Even these sordid treasures will finally be dedicated to God (18.7; 45.14).

Chs. 24-27: The "Isaiah Apocalypse." These chapters, unrelated to their context, are frequently called the "Isaiah Apocalypse" because of their use of eschatological themes found in later apocalyptic writings (universal judgment, eschatological banquet, heavenly signs, and the like). One may regard the section as a transitional form between traditional prophetic and apocalyptic materials, dating between 540 and 425 B.C. The chapters contain a variety of types of materials, e.g. eschatological prophecy in four sections (24.1-6, 16b-23; 25.6-10a; 26.20-27.1), four apocalyptic poems of deliverance (24.7-16a; 25.1-5; 26.1-6; 27.2-11), oracles of doom and triumph (26.20-27.1; 27.12-13; compare 25.10b-12), and a processional and an apocalyptic psalm (26.1-6; 27.2-11).

24.1-6: Universal judgment (compare vv. 16b-23). A picture of total destruction; compare the flood of Noah. **1:** *Twist*, by earthquake. **2:** Expansion of Hos. 4.9. **3:** *This word*, vv. 1-2. **5:** *Laws . . . statutes . . . covenants*, Is. 42.22-25. *Everlasting covenant*, perhaps a reference to the promise to Noah (Gen. 9.1-17; compare Is. 54.9); in any case, not the Mosaic covenant.

24.7-16a: Deliverance after destruction. **7-12:** Happiness of the vintage festivals is stilled.

¹⁰ The city of chaos is broken down,
every house is shut up so that none
can enter.

¹¹ There is an outcry in the streets for
lack of wine;
all joy has reached its eventide;
the gladness of the earth is
banished.

¹² Desolation is left in the city,
the gates are battered into ruins.

¹³ For thus it shall be in the midst of
the earth
among the nations,
as when an olive tree is beaten,
as at the gleaning when the
vintage is done.

¹⁴ They lift up their voices, they sing
for joy;
over the majesty of the LORD they
shout from the west.

¹⁵ Therefore in the east give glory to
the LORD;
in the coastlands of the sea, to the
name of the LORD, the God of
Israel.

¹⁶ From the ends of the earth we hear
songs of praise,
of glory to the Righteous One.

But I say, "I pine away,
I pine away. Woe is me!
For the treacherous deal
treacherously,
the treacherous deal very
treacherously."

¹⁷ Terror, and the pit, and the snare
are upon you, O inhabitant of the
earth!

¹⁸ He who flees at the sound of the
terror
shall fall into the pit;

and he who climbs out of the pit
shall be caught in the snare.
For the windows of heaven are
opened,
and the foundations of the earth
tremble.

¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken,
the earth is rent asunder,
the earth is violently shaken.

²⁰ The earth staggers like a drunken
man,
it sways like a hut;
its transgression lies heavy upon it,
and it falls, and will not rise again.

²¹ On that day the LORD will punish
the host of heaven, in heaven,
and the kings of the earth, on the
earth.

²² They will be gathered together
as prisoners in a pit;
they will be shut up in a prison,
and after many days they will be
punished.

²³ Then the moon will be confounded,
and the sun ashamed;
for the LORD of hosts will reign
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
and before his elders he will manifest
his glory.

25 O LORD, thou art my God;
I will exalt thee, I will praise
thy name;
for thou hast done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and
sure.

² For thou hast made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of aliens is a city no more,
it will never be rebuilt.

³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify
thee;

10: *City of chaos*, not Jerusalem (26.1-6); perhaps Babylon, destroyed by Xerxes I (485 B.C.), or it may refer to the universal destruction of vv. 1-6. **13-16a:** The coming triumph. *It*, the scattered Jewish remnant (19.24; Ezek.38.12), which praises God for saving and vindicating Israel, *the righteous one*.

24.16b-23: Universal judgment. **16b-18b:** This continues vv. 1-6. **17-18b:** This appears in Jer.48.43-44. **18c-23:** Reflection of Canaanite and Babylonian mythological background. *Windows of heaven*, source of downpours (Gen.7.11). **21-22:** *Host of heaven*, rebellious astral deities (Zeph.1.5; Jer.19.13) imprisoned in the *pit* (Is.14.15; Rev.20.1-3). *Many days*, compare Rev.20.3.7. **23:** *Moon . . . confounded, sun . . . ashamed* after losing their divine status (Jer.8.2; Dt.17.3). *Elders*, as with Moses (Ex.24.9-11,12-16; compare Rev.4.4,10-11).

25.1-5: Psalm of thanksgiving (compare Ps. 145). **2:** Identity of *the city* uncertain. **4:** *Poor*,

cities of ruthless nations will fear thee.

- ⁴ For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor,
a stronghold to the needy in his distress,
a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat;
for the blast of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall,
⁵ like heat in a dry place.
Thou dost subdue the noise of the aliens;
as heat by the shade of a cloud,
so the song of the ruthless is stilled.

6 On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. ⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.

9 It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

10 For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be trodden down in his place, as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit. ¹¹ And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim; but the LORD will lay low

his pride together with the skill¹ of his hands. ¹² And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, even to the dust.

26 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

- "We have a strong city;
he sets up salvation
as walls and bulwarks.
² Open the gates,
that the righteous nation which keeps faith
may enter in.
³ Thou dost keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on thee,
because he trusts in thee.
⁴ Trust in the LORD for ever,
for the LORD GOD
is an everlasting rock.
⁵ For he has brought low
the inhabitants of the height,
the lofty city.
He lays it low, lays it low to the ground,
casts it to the dust.
⁶ The foot tramples it,
the feet of the poor,
the steps of the needy."
⁷ The way of the righteous is level;
thou^m dost make smooth the path
of the righteous.
⁸ In the path of thy judgments,
O LORD, we wait for thee;
thy memorial name
is the desire of our soul.
⁹ My soul yearns for thee in the night,
my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee.

¹ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain
^m Cn Compare Gk: Heb thou (that art) upright

the helpless (perhaps Jews) contrasted with *strong peoples* (v. 3). **6-10a: Third eschatological section.** **6:** *This mountain*, Zion. *Cultic feast*, (1 Sam.9.13), later a part of the Messianic expectation (Lk.14.15-24). **7-8:** *Destroy . . . covering . . . veil* (of mourning, or perhaps ignorance), *swallow up death*, phrases reminiscent of Canaanite mythology. **25.10b-12: Oracle of doom.** **10b:** The mention of *Moab* is unexpected; possibly only symbolic, or emend to read "the enemy."

26.1-6: Song of victory (24.7-16a; 25.1-5), a processional psalm, sung on entering Jerusalem, the *strong city* (v. 1; compare Ps.24.7-10), celebrating God's victory (*salvation*) over the enemies of Judah, the *righteous nation*. **5:** *Low . . . height*, a familiar antithesis: the proud are abased, the humble exalted (Ps.147.6; Lk.1.52).

26.7-19: Apocalyptic psalm. **7:** Proverb of confidence in God's help (Ps.9.19; 18.25-27; 34.21-22). **8:** Compare Rev.22.20. God's chastisements are designed to benefit those chastized.

For when thy judgments are in the earth,
the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

¹⁰ If favor is shown to the wicked,
he does not learn righteousness;
in the land of uprightness he deals perversely
and does not see the majesty of the LORD.

¹¹ O LORD, thy hand is lifted up,
but they see it not.
Let them see thy zeal for thy people,
and be ashamed.
Let the fire for thy adversaries
consume them.

¹² O LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us,
thou hast wrought for us all our works.

¹³ O LORD our God,
other lords besides thee have ruled over us,
but thy name alone we acknowledge.

¹⁴ They are dead, they will not live;
they are shades, they will not arise;
to that end thou hast visited them with destruction
and wiped out all remembrance of them.

¹⁵ But thou hast increased the nation,
O LORD,
thou hast increased the nation;
thou art glorified;
thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.

¹⁶ O LORD, in distress they sought thee,
they poured out a prayerⁿ
when thy chastening was upon them.

¹⁷ Like a woman with child,

who writhes and cries out in her pangs,
when she is near her time,
so were we because of thee, O LORD;
¹⁸ we were with child, we writhed,
we have as it were brought forth wind.

We have wrought no deliverance in the earth,
and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

¹⁹ Thy dead shall live, their bodies^o shall rise.

O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
For thy dew is a dew of light,
and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall.

²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers,
and shut your doors behind you;
hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.

²¹ For behold, the LORD is coming forth out of his place
to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity,
and the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her,
and will no more cover her slain.

27 In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.

² In that day:
"A pleasant vineyard, sing of it!

ⁿ Heb uncertain
^o Cn Compare Syr Tg: Heb *my body*

10-14: In good times or bad the wicked fail to note God's guiding hand, but God and the righteous will ultimately defeat them. **14:** Compare v. 19. **16-19:** Without God, the people were in agony and helpless before their oppressors. Though as dead, they will be raised up by God, whose *light* will illumine the gloom of despair.

26.20-27.1: Fourth eschatological section, following logically the preceding petition, returns to the theme of judgment, and prepares for the return of the exiles referred to in 27.12-13. **20-21:** The people should await God's victory. **27.1:** *Leviathan*, Canaanite mythological sea monster; *dragon*, Hebrew "tannin," another sea monster (compare Ps.74.13-14). Here *Leviathan* may refer to Assyria and Babylonia and *the dragon*, Egypt (vv. 12-13; Ezek.29.3; Rev.12.7-12).

27.2-11: Fourth apocalyptic poem of deliverance. **2-5:** God's vineyard; compare 5.1-7, where

- ³ I, the LORD, am its keeper;
every moment I water it.
Lest any one harm it,
I guard it night and day;
⁴ I have no wrath.
Would that I had thorns and briers
to battle!
I would set out against them,
I would burn them up together.
⁵ Or let them lay hold of my
protection,
let them make peace with me,
let them make peace with me.”
- ⁶ In days to come^q Jacob shall take
root,
Israel shall blossom and put forth
shoots,
and fill the whole world with fruit.
- ⁷ Has he smitten them as he smote
those who smote them?
Or have they been slain as their
slayers were slain?
- ⁸ Measure by measure,^r by exile thou
didst contend with them;
he removed them with his fierce
blast in the day of the east wind.
- ⁹ Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob
will be expiated,
and this will be the full fruit of the
removal of his sin:
when he makes all the stones of the
altars
like chalkstones crushed to pieces,
no Ashe’rim or incense altars will
remain standing.
- ¹⁰ For the fortified city is solitary,
a habitation deserted and
forsaken, like the wilderness;
there the calf grazes,

- there he lies down, and strips its
branches.
- ¹¹ When its boughs are dry, they are
broken;
women come and make a fire of
them.
For this is a people without
discernment;
therefore he who made them will
not have compassion on them,
he that formed them will show
them no favor.

¹² In that day from the river Eu-
phra’tes to the Brook of Egypt the
LORD will thresh out the grain, and you
will be gathered one by one, O people
of Israel. ¹³ And in that day a great
trumpet will be blown, and those who
were lost in the land of Assyria and
those who were driven out to the land
of Egypt will come and worship the
LORD on the holy mountain at Jeru-
salem.

- 28** Woe to the proud crown of the
drunkards of E’phraim,
and to the fading flower of its
glorious beauty,
which is on the head of the rich
valley of those overcome with
wine!
- ² Behold, the Lord has one who is
mighty and strong;
like a storm of hail, a destroying
tempest,
like a storm of mighty, overflowing
waters,
he will cast down to the earth with
violence.

^q Heb *Those to come*

^r Compar^s Syr Vg Tg: The meaning of the Hebrew word
is unknown

the same figure is used in another sense. 7–11: Israel (*Jacob*) will be blessed after all semblance of idolatry has been removed. The enemy will be vanquished, his *city* destroyed (vv. 10–11; 24.10; 26.5).

27.12–13: Concluding oracle of doom and triumph. 12: The figure of an eschatological harvest symbolizes the separation of the wicked from the righteous (Jl.3.13; Mt.13.39; Rev.14.15–16). *Brook of Egypt*, Wadi el-‘Arish, fifty miles southwest of Gaza. 13: *The great trumpet*, which summoned Israel for solemn convocations (Num.10.2–10; Jl.2.15), will signal the final assembly of God’s elect (Mt.24.31; 1 Th.4.16).

28.1–35.10: Oracles concerning Judah and Ephraim. 28.1–13: Against religious leaders. 1–4: An oracle concerning *Ephraim* (Samaria), pronounced before Assyria’s onslaught (2 Kg.17.5) and introducing the longer (and later) oracle concerning *Judah* (for the occasion see 22.1–14 n.). 1: *Crown*, walls of Samaria (Am.3.9,15). 4: *First-ripe fig*, just as quickly will Samaria be con-

³ The proud crown of the drunkards
of E'phraim
will be trodden under foot;
⁴ and the fading flower of its glorious
beauty,
which is on the head of the rich
valley,
will be like a first-ripe fig before the
summer:
when a man sees it, he eats it up
as soon as it is in his hand.

⁵ In that day the LORD of hosts will
be a crown of glory,
and a diadem of beauty, to the
remnant of his people;
⁶ and a spirit of justice to him who
sits in judgment,
and strength to those who turn
back the battle at the gate.

⁷ These also reel with wine
and stagger with strong drink;
the priest and the prophet reel with
strong drink,
they are confused with wine,
they stagger with strong drink;
they err in vision,
they stumble in giving judgment.
⁸ For all tables are full of vomit,
no place is without filthiness.

⁹ "Whom will he teach knowledge,
and to whom will he explain the
message?
Those who are weaned from the
milk,
those taken from the breast?

¹⁰ For it is precept upon precept,
precept upon precept,
line upon line, line upon line,
here a little, there a little."

¹¹ Nay, but by men of strange lips

and with an alien tongue
the LORD will speak to this people,
¹² to whom he has said,
"This is rest;
give rest to the weary;
and this is repose";
yet they would not hear.
¹³ Therefore the word of the LORD
will be to them
precept upon precept, precept upon
precept,
line upon line, line upon line,
here a little, there a little;
that they may go, and fall backward,
and be broken, and snared, and
taken.

¹⁴ Therefore hear the word of the
LORD, you scoffers,
who rule this people in Jerusalem!

¹⁵ Because you have said, "We have
made a covenant with death,
and with Sheol we have an
agreement;
when the overwhelming scourge
passes through
it will not come to us;
for we have made lies our refuge,
and in falsehood we have taken
shelter";

¹⁶ therefore thus says the Lord God,
"Behold, I am laying in Zion for a
foundation
a stone, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, of a sure
foundation:
'He who believes will not be in
haste.'

¹⁷ And I will make justice the line,
and righteousness the plummet;
and hail will sweep away the refuge
of lies,
and waters will overwhelm the
shelter."

sumed. 5-6: A later interpolation; here *crown* is God's blessing of the remnant. 7-10: This section continues vv. 1-4, but is directed against Judah. The unrestrained hedonism of Samaria was paralleled in Judah, whose intemperate religious leaders were incapable of responsible guidance (Jer.13.12-14). *Priest* and *prophet*, presumably Isaiah's opponents (Jer.26.7-9), resented (compare vv. 9-10) Isaiah's condescending attitude. *Tables*, for sacrificial feast (1 Sam. 9.12-13). 11-13: If the people reject Isaiah, others (the Assyrians) will address them (Jer.5.15).

28.14-22: Against civil leaders. 14-15: The *scoffers* have forsaken God, their only defender, for other gods. 16-17a: The symbolic name of the foundation stone (v. 16d; 1.26) proclaims salvation for those who trust God. *Justice* and *righteousness* (1.21; 5.16) will characterize the

- ¹⁸ Then your covenant with death will be annulled,
and your agreement with Sheol
will not stand;
when the overwhelming scourge
passes through
you will be beaten down by it.
- ¹⁹ As often as it passes through it will take you;
for morning by morning it will pass through,
by day and by night;
and it will be sheer terror to
understand the message.
- ²⁰ For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on it,
and the covering too narrow to wrap oneself in it.
- ²¹ For the LORD will rise up as on Mount Pera'zim,
he will be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon;
to do his deed—strange is his deed!
and to work his work—alien is his work!
- ²² Now therefore do not scoff,
lest your bonds be made strong;
for I have heard a decree of destruction
from the Lord GOD of hosts upon
the whole land.
- ²³ Give ear, and hear my voice;
hearken, and hear my speech.
- ²⁴ Does he who plows for sowing plow continually?
does he continually open and harrow his ground?
- ²⁵ When he has leveled its surface,
does he not scatter dill, sow cummin,
and put in wheat in rows
and barley in its proper place,
and spelt as the border?
- ²⁶ For he is instructed aright;
his God teaches him.
- ²⁷ Dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge,
nor is a cart wheel rolled over cummin;
but dill is beaten out with a stick,
and cummin with a rod.
- ²⁸ Does one crush bread grain?
No, he does not thresh it for ever;
when he drives his cart wheel over it
with his horses, he does not crush it.
- ²⁹ This also comes from the LORD of hosts;
he is wonderful in counsel,
and excellent in wisdom.
- 29** Ho Ariel, Ariel,
the city where David
encamped!
Add year to year;
let the feasts run their round.
- ² Yet I will distress Ariel,
and there shall be moaning and lamentation,
and she shall be to me like an Ariel.
- ³ And I will encamp against you
round about,
and will besiege you with towers
and I will raise siegeworks against you.
- ⁴ Then deep from the earth you shall speak,
from low in the dust your words shall come;
your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost,
and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.
- ⁵ But the multitude of your foes shall be like small dust,

s Cn: Heb *strangers*

new Jerusalem. **17b–22**: The faithless will be destroyed by the storm of God's wrath. **20**: A proverb describing an irremediable situation. **21**: *Perazim*, 2 Sam.5.17–21.

28.23–29: Parable of the farmer, patterned on contemporary wisdom literature. God, like the farmer, conducts his affairs according to plan (compare vv. 16–17a). **25**: *Spelt*, less valuable than wheat. **27**: *Dill* and *cummin*, spices, too soft to thresh with a sledge.

29.1–8: Judah's eventual restoration. **1**: *Ariel*, meaning "mountain of God" or "hero," an allusion to Jerusalem. **2**: *Like an Ariel*, meaning "underworld" or "shade," a second meaning of Ariel (from the Babylonian word "Arallu," used here in a word-play to describe Jerusalem's degradation).

and the multitude of the ruthless
like passing chaff.
And in an instant, suddenly,
6 you will be visited by the LORD
of hosts
with thunder and with earthquake
and great noise,
with whirlwind and tempest, and
the flame of a devouring fire.
7 And the multitude of all the nations
that fight against Ariel,
all that fight against her and her
stronghold and distress her,
shall be like a dream, a vision of
the night.
8 As when a hungry man dreams he
is eating
and awakes with his hunger not
satisfied,
or as when a thirsty man dreams he
is drinking
and awakes faint, with his thirst
not quenched,
so shall the multitude of all the
nations be
that fight against Mount Zion.
9 Stupefy yourselves and be in a
stupor,
blind yourselves and be blind!
Be drunk, but not with wine;
stagger, but not with strong drink!
10 For the LORD has poured out upon
you
a spirit of deep sleep,
and has closed your eyes, the
prophets,
and covered your heads, the seers.
11 And the vision of all this has
become to you like the words of a book
that is sealed. When men give it to one
who can read, saying, "Read this," he
says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." 12 And
when they give the book to one who

cannot read, saying, "Read this," he
says, "I cannot read."
13 And the Lord said:
"Because this people draw near with
their mouth
and honor me with their lips,
while their hearts are far from me,
and their fear of me is a command-
ment of men learned by rote;
14 therefore, behold, I will again
do marvelous things with this
people,
wonderful and marvelous;
and the wisdom of their wise men
shall perish,
and the discernment of their
discerning men shall be hid."
15 Woe to those who hide deep from the
LORD their counsel,
whose deeds are in the dark,
and who say, "Who sees us? Who
knows us?"
16 You turn things upside down!
Shall the potter be regarded as the
clay;
that the thing made should say of
its maker,
"He did not make me";
or the thing formed say of him who
formed it,
"He has no understanding"?
17 Is it not yet a very little while
until Lebanon shall be turned into
a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field shall be
regarded as a forest?
18 In that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book,
and out of their gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind shall see.
19 The meek shall obtain fresh joy in
the LORD,

29.9-24: Spiritual insensibility; miscellaneous oracles. **9-12:** An independent section, related in thought to vv. 1-8 and 13-14. **9-10:** As drunkards, Jerusalem's leaders are incapable of moral discrimination. **11-12:** Explanatory later prose addition. *Book*, a scroll (Jer.32.9-15). **13-14:** A new relationship with God, based on a positive response to his acts (Ex.19.4-6), will replace Judah's superficial traditionalism (ironically called *wisdom* and *discernment*; compare 1 Cor. 1.19). **15-16:** Judah's leaders have usurped God's prerogatives by plotting against Assyria (45.9; Jer.18.1-6; Rom.9.20-21; Mt.10.24). **17-24:** Two later stanzas based on materials from chs. 40-66 and reflecting that period. **17-21:** Israel's suffering will soon be completed (35.1-2; 41.17). **19:** *Holy one of Israel*, see 1.4 n.; 41.14,16,20, and elsewhere. **22-24:** Abraham's God will

and the poor among men shall
exult in the Holy One of Israel.
²⁰ For the ruthless shall come to
nought and the scoffer cease,
and all who watch to do evil shall
be cut off,
²¹ who by a word make a man out to
be an offender,
and lay a snare for him who
reproves in the gate,
and with an empty plea turn aside
him who is in the right.

22 Therefore thus says the LORD,
who redeemed Abraham, concerning
the house of Jacob:

"Jacob shall no more be ashamed,
no more shall his face grow pale.
²³ For when he sees his children,
the work of my hands, in his midst,
they will sanctify my name;
they will sanctify the Holy One of
Jacob,
and will stand in awe of the God
of Israel.
²⁴ And those who err in spirit will
come to understanding,
and those who murmur will accept
instruction."

30 "Woe to the rebellious
children," says the LORD,
"who carry out a plan, but not mine;
and who make a league, but not of
my spirit,
that they may add sin to sin;
² who set out to go down to Egypt,
without asking for my counsel,
to take refuge in the protection of
Pharaoh,
and to seek shelter in the shadow
of Egypt!

³ Therefore shall the protection of
Pharaoh turn to your shame,
and the shelter in the shadow of
Egypt to your humiliation.
⁴ For though his officials are at Zo'an
and his envoys reach Ha'nes,
⁵ every one comes to shame
through a people that cannot profit
them,
that brings neither help nor profit,
but shame and disgrace."

⁶ An oracle on the beasts of the
Negeb.
Through a land of trouble and
anguish,
from where come the lioness and
the lion,
the viper and the flying serpent,
they carry their riches on the backs
of asses,
and their treasures on the humps
of camels,
to a people that cannot profit them.
⁷ For Egypt's help is worthless and
empty,
therefore I have called her
"Rahab who sits still."

⁸ And now, go, write it before them
on a tablet,
and inscribe it in a book,
that it may be for the time to come
as a witness for ever.

⁹ For they are a rebellious people,
lying sons,
sons who will not hear
the instruction of the LORD;
¹⁰ who say to the seers, "See not";
and to the prophets, "Prophecy not
to us what is right;
speak to us smooth things,

restore repentant Israel, who will accept God's instruction (Ezek.36.22-32). Compare the references to *Abraham* in 41.8; 51.2. This kind of reference is later than Isaiah's time.

30.1-7: Concerning the embassy sent to Egypt (about 703 B.C.) soliciting support against Assyria, a plan which Isaiah considered rebellion against God (28.14-22; 29.15-16). **1-5:** Since the pact is against God's wishes, it will fail. *Zoan*, see Ezek.30.13-19 n.; *Hanes* (Anusis), fifty miles south of Memphis. **6a:** Obscure, perhaps emend to read, "They carry, through the heat of the Negeb, . . ." **7b:** Obscure, perhaps emend to read, "Rahab, who shall be destroyed." *Rahab*, a mythological sea dragon vanquished in cosmic combat (26.20-27.1; Job 26.12).

30.8-17: Judah's connivance with Egypt against Assyria. **8-11:** Isaiah is to preserve his oracles in writing in preparation for their ultimate fulfilment (8.16-18). *Tablet*, see 8.1 n. *Book*, 29.11 n. *Lying sons*, those who deny their sonship (1.2-4). *Instruction*, Hebrew "torah," see 1.10 n.

- prophesy illusions,
¹¹ leave the way, turn aside from the path,
 let us hear no more of the Holy One of Israel.”
¹² Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel,
 “Because you despise this word,
 and trust in oppression and perverseness,
 and rely on them;
¹³ therefore this iniquity shall be to you
 like a break in a high wall, bulging out,
 and about to collapse,
 whose crash comes suddenly, in an instant;
¹⁴ and its breaking is like that of a potter’s vessel
 which is smashed so ruthlessly
 that among its fragments not a sherd is found
 with which to take fire from the hearth,
 or to dip up water out of the cistern.”
¹⁵ For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel,
 “In returning and rest you shall be saved;
 in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”
 And you would not, ¹⁶ but you said,
 “No! We will speed upon horses,”
 therefore you shall speed away;
 and, “We will ride upon swift steeds,”
 therefore your pursuers shall be swift.
¹⁷ A thousand shall flee at the threat of one,
 at the threat of five you shall flee,
 till you are left

like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain,
 like a signal on a hill.

- ¹⁸ Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you;
 therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.
 For the LORD is a God of justice;
 blessed are all those who wait for him.

¹⁹ Yea, O people in Zion who dwell at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when he hears it, he will answer you. ²⁰ And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself any more, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. ²¹ And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. ²² Then you will defile your silver-covered graven images and your gold-plated molten images. You will scatter them as unclean things; you will say to them, “Begone!”

²³ And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and grain, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your cattle will graze in large pastures; ²⁴ and the oxen and the asses that till the ground will eat salted provender, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. ²⁵ And upon every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. ²⁶ Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the

Smooth things, pleasant, though false (Jer.28.8–9). **12–14**: Sentence of judgment; this should probably follow vv. 15–17, since *this word* (v. 12b) is recorded in v. 15. Judah’s perverseness is a basic flaw which, under pressure, will burst and all will be lost. **15–17**: Instead of demonstrating victorious faith, Judah seeks more tangible military devices, but these will be no source of strength (7.3–9; 10.20–21).

30.18–26: *Hope for the afflicted*. A later (perhaps Exilic) addition. Judah is not condemned for faithlessness, but encouraged to have patience under trial. Verses 19–26 are a commentary on v. 18 and include familiar, though later, imagery (Jer.31.10–14; Ezek.34.25–30). **20**: *Teacher*, with some Hebrew manuscripts, but probably to be read “teachers,” i.e. prophets. **24**: *Salted provender*, some kind of silage.

sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the LORD binds up the hurt of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.

²⁷ Behold, the name of the LORD comes from far,
burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke;
his lips are full of indignation,
and his tongue is like a devouring fire;

²⁸ his breath is like an overflowing stream
that reaches up to the neck;
to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction,
and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray

²⁹ You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. ³⁰ And the LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and tempest and hailstones. ³¹ The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at the voice of the LORD, when he smites with his rod. ³² And every stroke of the staff of punishment which the LORD lays upon them will be to the sound of timbrels and lyres; battling with brandished arm he will fight with them. ³³ For a burning place^t has long been prepared; yea, for the king^u it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.

31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help
and rely on horses,
who trust in chariots because they are many
and in horsemen because they are very strong,
but do not look to the Holy One of Israel
or consult the LORD!

² And yet he is wise and brings disaster,
he does not call back his words,
but will arise against the house of the evildoers,
and against the helpers of those who work iniquity.

³ The Egyptians are men, and not God;
and their horses are flesh, and not spirit.

When the LORD stretches out his hand,
the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall,
and they will all perish together.

⁴ For thus the LORD said to me,
As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey,
and when a band of shepherds is called forth against him
is not terrified by their shouting
or daunted at their noise,
so the LORD of hosts will come down
to fight upon Mount Zion and upon its hill.

⁵ Like birds hovering, so the LORD of hosts
will protect Jerusalem;
he will protect and deliver it,
he will spare and rescue it.

⁶ Turn to him from whom you^v have deeply revolted, O people of Is-

^t Or Topheth ^u Or Molech ^v Heb they

30.27-33: Oracle against Assyria (about 701 B.C.; see chs. 36-37). The text is combined with a song of deliverance, and the probable original order is: vv. 27-28, 30-32a, 33, 25de, 29, 32b. **27-28, 30:** Like an approaching thunderstorm, God's fury will burst over Judah's enemies. **33:** *Burning place*, Topheth (see 2 Kg. 23.10 n.). *For the king*, i.e. Molech (see Lev. 18.21 n.).

31.1-3: Against Egypt (see 30.1-7). **1:** Judah's limited treasury precluded extensive military expenditures; her terrain was unfavorable for Egyptian chariots. **3:** Perhaps a reference to the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14.26-31).

31.4-9: Against Sennacherib (29.1-8; 37.21-25). **4-5:** God will defend Jerusalem. **6-7:** A

rael. ⁷ For in that day every one shall cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which your hands have sinfully made for you.

⁸ "And the Assyrian shall fall by a sword, not of man;
and a sword, not of man, shall devour him;

and he shall flee from the sword,
and his young men shall be put to forced labor.

⁹ His rock shall pass away in terror,
and his officers desert the standard in panic,"

says the LORD, whose fire is in Zion,
and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

32 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness,
and princes will rule in justice.

² Each will be like a hiding place from the wind,
a covert from the tempest,
like streams of water in a dry place,
like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

³ Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed,
and the ears of those who hear will hearken.

⁴ The mind of the rash will have good judgment,
and the tongue of the stammerers will speak readily and distinctly.

⁵ The fool will no more be called noble,
nor the knave said to be honorable.

⁶ For the fool speaks folly,
and his mind plots iniquity:
to practice ungodliness,

to utter error concerning the LORD,
to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied,

and to deprive the thirsty of drink.

⁷ The knaveries of the knave are evil;
he devises wicked devices
to ruin the poor with lying words,
even when the plea of the needy is right.

⁸ But he who is noble devises noble things,
and by noble things he stands.

⁹ Rise up, you women who are at ease,
hear my voice;
you complacent daughters, give ear to my speech.

¹⁰ In little more than a year
you will shudder, you complacent women;

for the vintage will fail,
the fruit harvest will not come.

¹¹ Tremble, you women who are at ease,
shudder, you complacent ones;
strip, and make yourselves bare,
and gird sackcloth upon your loins

¹² Beat upon your breasts for the pleasant fields,
for the fruitful vine,

¹³ for the soil of my people
growing up in thorns and briers;
yea, for all the joyous houses
in the joyful city.

¹⁴ For the palace will be forsaken,
the populous city deserted;
the hill and the watchtower
will become dens for ever,
a joy of wild asses,
a pasture of flocks;

¹⁵ until the Spirit is poured upon us
from on high,

later addition (compare 2.20). **8-9:** God's *sword* will destroy Assyria (Ezek. ch. 21). *Fire, furnace*, a reference to the temple altar.

32.1-8: The coming age of justice (possibly a later addition). Patterned on wisdom literature (28.23-29), this non-messianic oracle describes Judah's coming rulers as men of integrity, patience and high-mindedness (Pr.8.15-21). Fools will no longer receive attention (compare Pr.15.2,7,14, etc.).

32.9-14: Against the complacency of Judah's women (3.16-4.1) who now celebrate vintage festival but in another year will bemoan Judah's desolation. **11-12a:** Typical signs of mourning (Jer.4.7-8; 16.1-9).

32.15-20: The age of the Spirit (11.2) will see the transformation of all creation. The outpouring of the Spirit will produce a condition wherein man may enjoy true happiness (compare Jer.31.31-34). The section was probably added later (see 29.17-24).

- and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.
- ¹⁶ Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
- ¹⁷ And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever.
- ¹⁸ My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.
- ¹⁹ And the forest will utterly go down,^w
and the city will be utterly laid low.
- ²⁰ Happy are you who sow beside all waters,
who let the feet of the ox and the ass range free.

33 Woe to you, destroyer,
who yourself have not been destroyed;
you treacherous one,
with whom none has dealt treacherously!
When you have ceased to destroy,
you will be destroyed;
and when you have made an end of dealing treacherously,
you will be dealt with treacherously.

- ² O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for thee.
Be our arm every morning,
our salvation in the time of trouble.
- ³ At the thunderous noise peoples flee,
at the lifting up of thyself nations are scattered;
- ⁴ and spoil is gathered as the caterpillar gathers;

as locusts leap, men leap upon it.

- ⁵ The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high;
he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness;
- ⁶ and he will be the stability of your times,
abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge;
the fear of the LORD is his treasure.
- ⁷ Behold, the valiant ones^y cry without;
the envoys of peace weep bitterly.
- ⁸ The highways lie waste,
the wayfaring man ceases.
Covenants are broken,
witnesses^z are despised,
there is no regard for man.
- ⁹ The land mourns and languishes;
Lebanon is confounded and withers away;
Sharon is like a desert;
and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.

- ¹⁰ "Now I will arise," says the LORD,
"now I will lift myself up;
now I will be exalted.
- ¹¹ You conceive chaff, you bring forth stubble;
your breath is a fire that will consume you.
- ¹² And the peoples will be as if burned to lime,
like thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire."
- ¹³ Hear, you who are far off, what I have done;
and you who are near,
acknowledge my might.

^w Cn: Heb *And it will hail when the forest comes down*

^y The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^z One ancient Ms: Heb *cities*

33.1-24: A prophetic liturgy, an independent post-exilic addition, consisting of entreaties and oracles (compare Pss. 85; 46), perhaps used in the temple service, led by a prophet (Jer.14.2; 18.20). **1-6:** First section. **1:** A prophetic reproach; *destroyer*, used of Babylon in 21.2, here unidentified. **2:** A congregational prayer. *Our arm*, source of strength. **3-6:** Promise of God's victory and restoration of Zion. **7-16:** Second section. **7-9:** A congregational lament. The conditions (insecurity, distrust) are as critical as if normally forested and fruitful regions became barren. **10-13:** God commands the nations to acknowledge his might.

¹⁴ The sinners in Zion are afraid;
trembling has seized the godless:
"Who among us can dwell with the
devouring fire?"

Who among us can dwell with
everlasting burnings?"

¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks
uprightly,
who despises the gain of
oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold
a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of
bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking
upon evil,

¹⁶ he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the
fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him, his
water will be sure.

¹⁷ Your eyes will see the king in his
beauty;
they will behold a land that
stretches afar.

¹⁸ Your mind will muse on the terror:
"Where is he who counted, where
is he who weighed the tribute?
Where is he who counted the
towers?"

¹⁹ You will see no more the insolent
people,
the people of an obscure speech
which you cannot comprehend,
stammering in a tongue which you
cannot understand.

²⁰ Look upon Zion, the city of our
appointed feasts!
Your eyes will see Jerusalem,
a quiet habitation, an immovable
tent,
whose stakes will never be plucked
up,
nor will any of its cords be broken.

²¹ But there the LORD in majesty will
be for us

"The king in his beauty"; Zion restored

a place of broad rivers and
streams,

where no galley with oars can go,
nor stately ship can pass.

²² For the LORD is our judge, the LORD
is our ruler,
the LORD is our king; he will save
us.

²³ Your tackle hangs loose;
it cannot hold the mast firm in
its place,
or keep the sail spread out.

Then prey and spoil in abundance
will be divided;
even the lame will take the prey.

²⁴ And no inhabitant will say, "I am
sick";
the people who dwell there will be
forgiven their iniquity.

34 Draw near, O nations, to hear,
and hearken, O peoples!

Let the earth listen, and all that fills
it;

the world, and all that comes from
it.

² For the LORD is enraged against all
the nations,
and furious against all their host,
he has doomed them, has given
them over for slaughter.

³ Their slain shall be cast out,
and the stench of their corpses
shall rise;
the mountains shall flow with their
blood.

⁴ All the host of heaven shall rot away,
and the skies roll up like a scroll.
All their host shall fall,
as leaves fall from the vine,
like leaves falling from the fig
tree.

⁵ For my sword has drunk its fill in
the heavens;

14-16: God's wrath will destroy both *the sinners in Zion* and Zion's external enemies. **15-16:** See Ps. 15 and 24.3-5. **17-24:** Third section. **17-20:** The unpleasant past (28.11-13) will become a memory in the peaceful reign of the Messianic king. **21-24:** The land will be amply watered (Ezek.47.1-12), not for war fleets but to satisfy the people's needs.

34.1-17. The terrible end of God's enemies. Compare Ezek. chs. 38-39. **4:** For the destruction and fall of *the host of heaven*, synonymous with God's earthly enemies, see 24.21. **5:** The de-

- behold, it descends for judgment
upon Edom,
upon the people I have doomed.
- ⁶ The LORD has a sword; it is sated
with blood,
it is gorged with fat,
with the blood of lambs and goats,
with the fat of the kidneys of
rams.
For the LORD has a sacrifice in
Bozrah,
a great slaughter in the land of
Edom.
- ⁷ Wild oxen shall fall with them,
and young steers with the mighty
bulls.
Their land shall be soaked with
blood,
and their soil made rich with fat.
- ⁸ For the LORD has a day of
vengeance,
a year of recompense for the cause
of Zion.
- ⁹ And the streams of Edom^a shall be
turned into pitch,
and her soil into brimstone;
her land shall become burning
pitch.
- ¹⁰ Night and day it shall not be
quenched;
its smoke shall go up for ever.
From generation to generation it
shall lie waste;
none shall pass through it for ever
and ever.
- ¹¹ But the hawk and the porcupine
shall possess it,
the owl and the raven shall dwell
in it.
He shall stretch the line of confusion
over it,
and the plummet of chaos over^b
its nobles.
- ¹² They shall name it No Kingdom
There,
and all its princes shall be nothing.
- ¹³ Thorns shall grow over its
strongholds,
nettles and thistles in its fortresses.
It shall be the haunt of jackals,
an abode for ostriches.
- ¹⁴ And wild beasts shall meet with
hyenas,
the satyr shall cry to his fellow;
yea, there shall the night hag alight,
and find for herself a resting place.
- ¹⁵ There shall the owl nest and lay
and hatch and gather her young
in her shadow;
yea, there shall the kites be gathered,
each one with her mate.
- ¹⁶ Seek and read from the book of the
LORD:
Not one of these shall be missing;
none shall be without her mate.
For the mouth of the LORD has
commanded,
and his Spirit has gathered them.
- ¹⁷ He has cast the lot for them,
his hand has portioned it out to
them with the line;
they shall possess it for ever,
from generation to generation
they shall dwell in it.
- 35** The wilderness and the dry
land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and
blossom;
like the crocus² it shall blossom
abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given
to it,

^a Heb *her streams*
^b Heb *lacks over*

struction of Edom (see Jer.49.7–22) illustrates the fate of all of God's enemies, as in Ob.15–16. For the *sword* of the LORD, see Ezek. ch. 21. *Sacrifice*, compare Ezek.39.17–20. The animals named are those usually sacrificed. **8:** *Day*, see 13.6; 27.2. **9–17:** Aftermath of God's assault. **9–10:** Edom suffers the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah (13.19; Gen.19.24). **11:** Her desolation will be as the primordial chaos (Jer.4.23–28). **12:** *No Kingdom There*, a mocking name suggesting the end of all who oppose God. **13–15:** *Night hag*, the storm demon Lilith, found in abandoned places, and wild animals (13.19–22) haunt her ruins. **16:** *The book of the LORD*, compare 4.3.

35.1–10: *Zion restored*. With 34.1–17 this probably belonged originally to chs. 40–66.

the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

everlasting joy shall be upon their
heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee
away.

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful
heart,
"Be strong, fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be
opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶ then shall the lame man leap like
a hart,
and the tongue of the dumb sing
for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the
wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a
pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of
water;
the haunt of jackals shall become
a swamp,^c
the grass shall become reeds and
rushes.

⁸ And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy
Way;
the unclean shall not pass over it,^d
and fools shall not err therein.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come
up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall
return,
and come to Zion with singing;

36 In the fourteenth year of King
Hezeki'ah, Sennach'erib king of
Assyria came up against all the fortified
cities of Judah and took them. ² And
the king of Assyria sent the Rab'shakeh
from Lachish to King Hezeki'ah at Je-
rusalem, with a great army. And he
stood by the conduit of the upper pool
on the highway to the Fuller's Field.
³ And there came out to him Eli'akim
the son of Hilki'ah, who was over the
household, and Shebna the secretary,
and Jo'ah the son of Asaph, the re-
corder.

⁴ And the Rab'shakeh said to them,
"Say to Hezeki'ah, 'Thus says the great
king, the king of Assyria: On what do
you rest this confidence of yours? ⁵ Do
you think that mere words are strategy
and power for war? On whom do you
now rely, that you have rebelled
against me? ⁶ Behold, you are relying
on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff,
which will pierce the hand of any man
who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of
Egypt to all who rely on him. ⁷ But if
you say to me, 'We rely on the LORD
our God,' is it not he whose high places
and altars Hezeki'ah has removed, say-
ing to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You
shall worship before this altar'? ⁸ Come
now, make a wager with my master the
king of Assyria: I will give you two
thousand horses, if you are able on your
part to set riders upon them. ⁹ How
then can you repulse a single captain
among the least of my master's serv-
ants, when you rely on Egypt for chari-

^c Cn: Heb in the haunt of jackals is her resting place
^d Heb it and he is for them a wayfarer

1-6a: All creation will see God's glory; the helpless exiles (*feeble knees* of exhausted prisoners; *blind; dumb*) will receive new courage and hope. **8-10:** On the Holy Way, through a land like paradise (11.6-9), they will *come to Zion* to sing the praises of God, their deliverer.

36.1-39.8: Historical appendix, duplicated in 2 Kg.18.13-20.19, except for 38.9-20. **36.1-22:** The attack of Sennacherib (701 B.C.), see 2 Kg.18.13-27. **1:** All the fortified cities, forty-six according to Sennacherib's account. **2:** Rabshakeh, Assyrian title meaning "chief steward." **3:** Eliakim, Shebna, compare 22.15-25. **6:** Compare 31.1-3; Ezek.29.6. **7:** A reference to Heze-

ots and for horsemen? ¹⁰ Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.' "

11 Then Eli'akim, Shebna, and Jo'ah said to the Rab'shakeh, "Pray, speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall." ¹² But the Rab'shakeh said, "Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?"

13 Then the Rab'shakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! ¹⁴ Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezeki'ah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you. ¹⁵ Do not let Hezeki'ah make you rely on the LORD by saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ¹⁶ Do not listen to Hezeki'ah; for thus says the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out to me; then every one of you will eat of his own vine, and every one of his own fig tree, and every one of you will drink the water of his own cistern; ¹⁷ until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. ¹⁸ Beware lest Hezeki'ah mislead you by saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ¹⁹ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharva'im? Have they delivered Sama'ria

out of my hand? ²⁰ Who among all the gods of these countries have delivered their countries out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" "

21 But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, "Do not answer him."

²² Then Eli'akim the son of Hilki'ah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Jo'ah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezeki'ah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of the Rab'shakeh.

37 When King Hezeki'ah heard it, he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. ² And he sent Eli'akim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, clothed with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. ³ They said to him, "Thus says Hezeki'ah, 'This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth.' ⁴ It may be that the LORD your God heard the words of the Rab'shakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.' "

5 When the servants of King Hezeki'ah came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. ⁷ Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land; and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.' "

kiah's reform, 2 Kg.18.4. 11: *Aramaic* was the current diplomatic language. 12: The results of the projected siege. 13-20: A speech intended to demoralize Jerusalem's defenders. 19: *Hamath, Arpad*, see 10.9 n.; *Sepharvaim* (Sibraim, Ezek.47.16), a town between Hamath and Damascus, near Homs; *Samaria*, now an Assyrian province (2 Kg.17.5-6,24).

37.1-35: Hezekiah consults Isaiah. See 2 Kg. ch. 19. 1: *Clothes rent, sackcloth*, signs of mourning and despair (15.3; Jl.2.12). For recourse to the temple in national crises, see Neh. ch. 9; Jl.1.13-14. 2: The embassy to Isaiah recalls the consultation of prophets by earlier kings (1 Kg.22.8-28; 2 Kg.1.9-17; 3.11-27). 5-7: Isaiah's reply reassures Hezekiah. *Rumor* of internal

8 The Rab'shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah; for he had heard that the king had left Lachish. ⁹ Now the king heard concerning Tirha'kah king of Ethiopia, "He has set out to fight against you." And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezeki'ah, saying, ¹⁰ "Thus shall you speak to Hezeki'ah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, destroying them utterly. And shall you be delivered? ¹² Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations which my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Tel-assar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharva'im, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?' "

¹⁴ Hezeki'ah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezeki'ah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵ And Hezeki'ah prayed to the LORD: ¹⁶ "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, thou art the God, thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. ¹⁷ Incline thy ear, O LORD, and hear; open thy eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennach'erib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁸ Of a truth, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, ¹⁹ and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's

hands, wood and stone; therefore they were destroyed. ²⁰ So now, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou alone art the LORD."

²¹ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezeki'ah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennach'erib king of Assyria, ²² this is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him:

'She despises you, she scorns you—the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you—the daughter of Jerusalem.

²³ 'Whom have you mocked and reviled?

Against whom have you raised your voice

and haughtily lifted your eyes?

Against the Holy One of Israel!

²⁴ By your servants you have mocked the Lord,

and you have said, With my many chariots

I have gone up the heights of the mountains,

to the far recesses of Lebanon;

I felled its tallest cedars,

its choicest cypresses;

I came to its remotest height, its densest forest.

²⁵ I dug wells

and drank waters,

and I dried up with the sole of my foot

all the streams of Egypt.

²⁶ 'Have you not heard

that I determined it long ago?

I planned from days of old

what now I bring to pass,

problems at home. **8-20:** Sennacherib's second challenge to Hezekiah (about 688-687 B.C., perhaps at the time of a later attack on Jerusalem). **8:** *Libnah*, ten miles north of Lachish. **9:** *Tirhakah*, 2 Kg.19.9. **12:** Places in Mesopotamia: *Gozan*, on west tributary of Khabur River, east of Haran; *Haran*, on upper Balikh River (Gen.11.27-32); *Rezeph*, between Nineveh and northern Khabur; *Eden*, Bit Adini, on middle Euphrates (Ezek.27.23); *Telassar*, on middle Euphrates. **14:** *Letter*, i.e. scroll. **16:** *Enthroned* . . . , temple imagery (1 Kg.8.6-7; Ezek.1.4-28). **17-20:** This recalls Sennacherib's claim, vv. 11-13; *no gods*, Jer.10.1-16. **21:** See vv. 33-35. **22-29:** Isaiah's challenge to Sennacherib (10.5-19). **22-29:** Isaiah taunts Sennacherib, reminding him that he has defied God, who has determined history's course and will frustrate Senna-

that you should make fortified cities
crash into heaps of ruins,
27 while their inhabitants, shorn of
strength,
are dismayed and confounded,
and have become like plants of the
field
and like tender grass,
like grass on the housetops,
blighted^e before it is grown.

28 'I know your sitting down
and your going out and coming in,
and your raging against me.
29 Because you have raged against me
and your arrogance has come to
my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth,
and I will turn you back on the way
by which you came.'

30 "And this shall be the sign for
you: this year eat what grows of itself,
and in the second year what springs of
the same; then in the third year sow
and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat
their fruit. 31 And the surviving rem-
nant of the house of Judah shall again
take root downward, and bear fruit
upward; 32 for out of Jerusalem shall
go forth a remnant, and out of Mount
Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of
the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

33 "Therefore thus says the LORD
concerning the king of Assyria: He
shall not come into this city, or shoot
an arrow there, or come before it with
a shield, or cast up a siege mound
against it. 34 By the way that he came,
by the same he shall return, and he shall
not come into this city, says the LORD.
35 For I will defend this city to save it,

for my own sake and for the sake of
my servant David."

36 And the angel of the LORD went
forth, and slew a hundred and eighty-
five thousand in the camp of the As-
syrians; and when men arose early in
the morning, behold, these were all
dead bodies. 37 Then Sennach'erib king
of Assyria departed, and went home
and dwelt at Nin'evah. 38 And as he
was worshiping in the house of Nisroch
his god, Adram'melech and Share'zer,
his sons, slew him with the sword, and
escaped into the land of Ar'arat. And
E'sar-had'don his son reigned in his
stead.

38 In those days Hezeki'ah be-
came sick and was at the point
of death. And Isaiah the prophet the
son of Amoz came to him, and said to
him, "Thus says the LORD: Set your
house in order; for you shall die, you
shall not recover." 2 Then Hezeki'ah
turned his face to the wall, and prayed
to the LORD, 3 and said, "Remember
now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I
have walked before thee in faithfulness
and with a whole heart, and have done
what is good in thy sight." And Heze-
ki'ah wept bitterly. 4 Then the word of
the LORD came to Isaiah: 5 "Go and
say to Hezeki'ah, Thus says the LORD,
the God of David your father: I have
heard your prayer, I have seen your
tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to
your life. 6 I will deliver you and this
city out of the hand of the king of As-
syria, and defend this city.

7 "This is the sign to you from the
LORD, that the LORD will do this thing
that he has promised: 8 Behold, I will
make the shadow cast by the declining

^e With 2 Kg 19.26: Heb *field*

cherib's plans. 27-28: Read with the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, "... housetops which is parched
by the east wind; your rising and your sitting down I know . . ." 30-32: A second assurance to
Hezekiah (see vv. 5-7), of which the sign will be a return to normal conditions by the third
year. These verses belong between v. 35 and v. 36. *Remnant*, see 10.22 n. 33-35: A third word of
assurance to Hezekiah (compare v. 21). Verse 35 recalls Nathan's words to David (2 Sam.
7.12-17).

37.36-38: Devastation of Sennacherib's army. 36: *Angel*, a figure and explanation for a
plague (Ex.12.29; 2 Sam.24.15-17).

38.1-22: Hezekiah's illness and recovery. See 2 Kg. ch. 20. 3: The form of Hezekiah's prayer

sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps." So the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined.^f

9 A writing of Hezeki'ah king of Judah, after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

¹⁰ I said, In the noontide of my days I must depart;

I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years.

¹¹ I said, I shall not see the LORD in the land of the living;

I shall look upon man no more among the inhabitants of the world.

¹² My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent; like a weaver I have rolled up my life;

he cuts me off from the loom; from day to night thou dost bring me to an end;^g

¹³ I cry for help^h until morning; like a lion he breaks all my bones; from day to night thou dost bring me to an end.^g

¹⁴ Like a swallow or a craneⁱ I clamor, I moan like a dove.

My eyes are weary with looking upward.

O Lord, I am oppressed; be thou my security!

¹⁵ But what can I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it.

All my sleep has fled^j because of the bitterness of my soul.

¹⁶ O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit.^k

Oh, restore me to health and make me live!

¹⁷ Lo, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but thou hast held back^l my life from the pit of destruction, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

¹⁸ For Sheol cannot thank thee, death cannot praise thee; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for thy faithfulness.

¹⁹ The living, the living, he thanks thee, as I do this day; the father makes known to the children thy faithfulness.

²⁰ The LORD will save me, and we will sing to stringed instruments^m all the days of our life, at the house of the LORD.

21 Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a cake of figs, and apply it to the boil, that he may recover." ²² Hezeki'ah also had said, "What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"

39 At that time Mer'odach-bal'-adan the son of Bal'adan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters

^f The Hebrew of this verse is obscure

^g Heb uncertain ^h Cn: Heb obscure

ⁱ Heb uncertain

^j Cn Compare Syr: Heb I will walk slowly all my years

^k Heb uncertain

^l Cn Compare Gk Vg: Heb loved

^m Heb my stringed instruments

for recovery is found in the Psalms (compare Ps. 6). **8:** *Dial*, literally "stairs" or "steps." Following the text of one ancient Hebrew manuscript (among the Dead Sea Scrolls) one may translate: "... Behold, I shall turn back the shadow of the steps down which the sun has moved on the steps of the roof chamber of Ahaz your father. I will cause the sun to move backwards ten steps." And the sun moved back ten steps on the steps down which the shadow had descended." **9-20:** This song, traditionally ascribed to Hezekiah, is a liturgical thanksgiving for use when presenting in the temple a thank-offering for personal deliverance (Ps. 32; 1 Sam.2.1-10; Jon.2.2-9). **9:** *Writing*, Hebrew "miktab," read "Miktam," as in Pss. 56-60. **16ab:** Corrupted text; emend to read, "O LORD, with thee are the days of my life, thine alone is the life of my spirit." **17:** God's saving power is shown in recovery from illness and forgiveness of sins (Lk.5.17-26). **21-22:** These verses belong between vv. 6-7.

39.1-8: Merodach-baladan's embassy. See 2 Kg.20.12-19. **2:** The tribute paid Sennacherib

and a present to Hezeki'ah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. ² And Hezeki'ah welcomed them; and he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezeki'ah did not show them. ³ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezeki'ah, and said to him, "What did these men say? And whence did they come to you?" Hezeki'ah said, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon." ⁴ He said, "What have they seen in your house?" Hezeki'ah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them."

⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezeki'ah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶ Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, says the LORD. ⁷ And some of your own sons, who are born to you, shall be taken away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." ⁸ Then said Hezeki'ah to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my days."

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,

and cry to her
that her warfare" is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's
hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way
of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a
highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be
made low;

the uneven ground shall become
level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be
revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has
spoken."

⁶ A voice says, "Cry!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower
of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows
upon it;
surely the people is grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand
for ever.

⁹ Get you up to a high mountain,

n Or time of service

(701 B.C.) depleted Hezekiah's treasury (2 Kg.18.14-16), much of which had been derived from Arabian trade (2 Chr.32.27-29). **3-4:** Isaiah suspected intrigue with the Babylonian revolutionary. **5-7:** The description fits the events of 597 B.C.; see 2 Kg.24.10-17. **8:** With this postponement of punishment, compare 1 Kg.21.27-29.

Chapters 40-55: Book of the Consolation of Israel. 40.1-11: The prophet is called to announce God's coming. The background scene is the council of heaven, from which the voices come. **1-2:** Introduction. *Comfort*, for the Exile is nearly over (for similar repetitions, see 51.9; 52.1; 57.14). *My people . . . your God*, covenant words (Ex.19.4-6; Jer.11.5). *Her warfare*, meaning "her time of service" (the Exile). *Double* may reflect Ex.22.7-8, or suggest that God exacted more from his people than was to be expected. **3-5:** Quoted in Lk.3.4-6; see also Mt.3.3; Mk.1.3; Jn.1.23. *The way of the LORD* (common figure in II Isaiah; 42.16; 43.16,19; 48.17; 49.11; 51.10), who comes to restore his people (35.1-10). *The glory of the LORD* shall return (Ezek.1.28; 10.18-19; 43.1-5). **6-8:** The voice of God's herald proclaims the immutability of God's word (9.8; 55.8-11) in contrast to all living things. Quoted in 1 Pet.1.24-25. **6a:** Compare Jer.1.4-8. **6b:** See 51.12 n. **7: Breath**, wind (Jer.4.11).

- O Zion, herald of good tidings;^o
 lift up your voice with strength,
 O Jerusalem, herald of good
 tidings,^p
 lift it up, fear not;
 say to the cities of Judah,
 "Behold your God!"
- ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with
 might,
 and his arm rules for him;
 behold, his reward is with him,
 and his recompense before him.
- ¹¹ He will feed his flock like a
 shepherd,
 he will gather the lambs in his
 arms,
 he will carry them in his bosom,
 and gently lead those that are with
 young.
- ¹² Who has measured the waters in the
 hollow of his hand
 and marked off the heavens with
 a span,
 enclosed the dust of the earth in a
 measure
 and weighed the mountains in
 scales
 and the hills in a balance?
- ¹³ Who has directed the Spirit of the
 LORD,
 or as his counselor has instructed
 him?
- ¹⁴ Whom did he consult for his
 enlightenment,
 and who taught him the path of
 justice,
 and taught him knowledge,
 and showed him the way of
 understanding?
- ¹⁵ Behold, the nations are like a drop
 from a bucket,
 and are accounted as the dust on
 the scales;
 behold, he takes up the isles like
 fine dust.
- ¹⁶ Lebanon would not suffice for fuel,
 nor are its beasts enough for a
 burnt offering.
- ¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing
 before him,
 they are accounted by him as less
 than nothing and emptiness.
- ¹⁸ To whom then will you liken God,
 or what likeness compare with
 him?
- ¹⁹ The idol! a workman casts it,
 and a goldsmith overlays it with
 gold,
 and casts for it silver chains.
- ²⁰ He who is impoverished^q chooses
 for an offering
 wood that will not rot;
 he seeks out a skilful craftsman
 to set up an image that will not
 move.
- ²¹ Have you not known? Have you not
 heard?
 Has it not been told you from the
 beginning?
 Have you not understood from the
 foundations of the earth?
- ²² It is he who sits above the circle of
 the earth,
 and its inhabitants are like
 grasshoppers;
 who stretches out the heavens like a
 curtain,
 and spreads them like a tent to
 dwell in;
- ²³ who brings princes to nought,
 and makes the rulers of the earth
 as nothing.
- ²⁴ Scarcely are they planted, scarcely
 sown,
 scarcely has their stem taken root
 in the earth,

^o Or O herald of good tidings to Zion

^p Or O herald of good tidings to Jerusalem

^q Heb uncertain

9-11: "Behold, your God" who comes in celestial grandeur, yet is compassionate (Ezek. ch. 34). See Acts 10.36; Rom. 10.15; Rev.22.7,12. *Jerusalem*, used for Judah over thirty times in chs. 40-55. *Arm*, symbol of power (33.2; 48.14; 51.5,9; 52.10; 53.1).

40.12-31: Creator of the universe. **12:** *Waters* (seas), *heavens*, *earth*—the world's three divisions. **13-14:** God is the source of all knowledge and wisdom (Pr.8.22-31; Job 38.2-39.30). **15-17:** Before him all nations must bow. **18-20:** Idols cannot be compared with him (see 42.17; 45.16,20; Jer.10.1-16). **21-24:** God, the creator, is also Lord of history (44.24-28; 51.9-10).

when he blows upon them, and they
wither,
and the tempest carries them off
like stubble.

²⁵ To whom then will you compare me,
that I should be like him? says the
Holy One.

²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see:
who created these?
He who brings out their host by
number,
calling them all by name;
by the greatness of his might,
and because he is strong in power
not one is missing.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hid from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my
God”?

²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not
heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the
earth.

He does not faint or grow weary,
his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he
increases strength.

³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be
weary,
and young men shall fall
exhausted;

³¹ but they who wait for the LORD
shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings
like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

4 Listen to me in silence, O
coastlands;
let the peoples renew their
strength;
let them approach, then let them
speak;
let us together draw near for
judgment.

² Who stirred up one from the east
whom victory meets at every step?
He gives up nations before him,
so that he tramples kings under
foot;
he makes them like dust with his
sword,
like driven stubble with his bow.

³ He pursues them and passes on
safely,
by paths his feet have not trod.

⁴ Who has performed and done this,
calling the generations from the
beginning?
I, the LORD, the first,
and with the last; I am He.

⁵ The coastlands have seen and are
afraid,
the ends of the earth tremble;
they have drawn near and come.

⁶ Every one helps his neighbor,
and says to his brother, “Take
courage!”

⁷ The craftsman encourages the
goldsmith,
and he who smooths with the
hammer him who strikes the
anvil,
saying of the soldering, “It is good”;
and they fasten it with nails so
that it cannot be moved.

Circle, tent, the vault of heaven (Pr.8.27; Job 22.14). **25–27**: God is incomparable (vv. 18–20) and omniscient. *Created* (Gen.1.1), a word used more often by Second Isaiah than by other Old Testament writers (v. 28; 41.20; 42.5; 43.7,15; 45.7,8,12,18; 54.16). **26**: *Host* of heaven (3.1). **28–31**: The omnipotent God is concerned for man. **31**: *Wait* expresses confidence that God will not desert his people; a common concept from this period on (49.23; Ps.25.3; 33.20).

41.1–42.4: **The trial of the nations. 1**: The background scene is the law court (a recurrent theme in chs. 41–46; 48). The historical background is the victories of Cyrus of Persia. *Coastlands*, Mediterranean lands and islands (frequent in Second Isaiah, 40.15; 42.4; 49.1; 51.5). **2–4**: *One from the east*, Cyrus. The God of history is calling Cyrus. *Victory*, the Hebrew term implies God's approval. *First . . . last*, 43.10; 44.6; Rev.22.13. **5–7**: The nations are as powerless as their gods (40.19–22). **8–10**: *Israel, my servant* (Jer.30.10; 46.27–28), though punished for

- ⁸ But you, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
the offspring of Abraham, my
friend;
⁹ you whom I took from the ends of
the earth,
and called from its farthest
corners,
saying to you, "You are my servant,
I have chosen you and not cast
you off";
¹⁰ fear not, for I am with you,
be not dismayed, for I am your
God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my
victorious right hand.
- ¹¹ Behold, all who are incensed against
you
shall be put to shame and
confounded;
those who strive against you
shall be as nothing and shall
perish.
- ¹² You shall seek those who contend
with you,
but you shall not find them;
those who war against you
shall be as nothing at all.
- ¹³ For I, the LORD your God,
hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, "Fear not,
I will help you."
- ¹⁴ Fear not, you worm Jacob,
you men of Israel!
I will help you, says the LORD;
your Redeemer is the Holy One
of Israel.
- ¹⁵ Behold, I will make of you a
threshing sledge,
new, sharp, and having teeth;
you shall thresh the mountains and
crush them,
and you shall make the hills like
chaff;
¹⁶ you shall winnow them and the wind
shall carry them away,
and the tempest shall scatter them.
And you shall rejoice in the LORD;
in the Holy One of Israel you
shall glory.
- ¹⁷ When the poor and needy seek
water,
and there is none,
and their tongue is parched with
thirst,
I the LORD will answer them,
I the God of Israel will not forsake
them.
- ¹⁸ I will open rivers on the bare heights,
and fountains in the midst of the
valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of
water,
and the dry land springs of water.
- ¹⁹ I will put in the wilderness the cedar,
the acacia, the myrtle, and the
olive;
I will set in the desert the cypress,
the plane and the pine together;
²⁰ that men may see and know,
may consider and understand
together,
that the hand of the LORD has done
this,
the Holy One of Israel has created
it.
- ²¹ Set forth your case, says the LORD;
bring your proofs, says the King
of Jacob.
- ²² Let them bring them, and tell us
what is to happen.
Tell us the former things, what they
are,
that we may consider them,
that we may know their outcome;

faithlessness, will now be restored (44.1–5; 45.4; 48.10). There is a different emphasis on "servant" in the Servant Songs (see 42.1). **11–13:** The nations are judged. **14–16:** With God's help Israel can thresh the mountains into dust. *Redeemer*, the Hebrew term elsewhere may refer to the blood avenger (e.g. Num.35.19), but here it describes the avenger of the oppressed and liberator of the LORD's people (43.14; 44.6; 47.4). **17–20:** A rhapsody on God as Lord of nature (55.13; Ezek.47.12). *Holy One*, v. 16; 40.25; 1.4. **21–24:** The pagan nations are challenged to prove the validity of their claims and their gods. *Former things* (46.9) have a present significance. The nations have no defense. Verses 23–24 contain the first explicit statement against the very

or declare to us the things to come.
²³ Tell us what is to come hereafter,
 that we may know that you are
 gods;
 do good, or do harm,
 that we may be dismayed and
 terrified.
²⁴ Behold, you are nothing,
 and your work is nought;
 an abomination is he who chooses
 you.

²⁵ I stirred up one from the north, and
 he has come,
 from the rising of the sun, and he
 shall call on my name;
 he shall trample^r on rulers as on
 mortar,
 as the potter treads clay.

²⁶ Who declared it from the beginning,
 that we might know,
 and beforetime, that we might
 say, "He is right?"

There was none who declared it,
 none who proclaimed,
 none who heard your words.

²⁷ I first have declared it to Zion,^s
 and I give to Jerusalem a herald
 of good tidings.

²⁸ But when I look there is no one;
 among these there is no counselor
 who, when I ask, gives an answer.

²⁹ Behold, they are all a delusion;
 their works are nothing;
 their molten images are empty
 wind.

42 Behold my servant, whom I
 uphold,
 my chosen, in whom my soul
 delights;

I have put my Spirit upon him,
 he will bring forth justice to the
 nations.

² He will not cry or lift up his voice,
 or make it heard in the street;

³ a bruised reed he will not break,
 and a dimly burning wick he will
 not quench;
 he will faithfully bring forth
 justice.

⁴ He will not fail^t or be discouraged^u
 till he has established justice in
 the earth;
 and the coastlands wait for his
 law.

⁵ Thus says God, the LORD,
 who created the heavens and
 stretched them out,
 who spread forth the earth and
 what comes from it,
 who gives breath to the people upon
 it
 and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶ "I am the LORD, I have called you
 in righteousness,
 I have taken you by the hand and
 kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to
 the people,
 a light to the nations,

⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
 to bring out the prisoners from the
 dungeon,
 from the prison those who sit in
 darkness.

⁸ I am the LORD, that is my name;
 my glory I give to no other,
 nor my praise to given images.

^r Cn: Heb come

^s Cn: Heb first to Zion, Behold, behold them

^t Or burn dimly ^u Or bruised

existence of the gods of other nations (43.8–13). **25–29:** Second (compare vv. 11–13) judgment against the nations. *From the north . . . the rising of the sun*, from Persia to the northeast (the first phrase earlier referred to Assyria [14.31], and Babylonia [Jer.6.22]). **29:** Compare v. 24; 40.18–20.

42.1–4: The first Servant Song (49.1–6; 50.4–11; 52.13–53.12). Scholars hold differing views of the identity of the Servant in these Songs. The position taken here is that the Servant is the nation; others regard him as an individual, and some as both. **The mission of the Servant.** The Servant is Israel (*my chosen*; not Cyrus) who will, with all patience (v. 3–4a), bring God's teaching (*law*, 1.10) and restore *justice* (5.16) to the nations. *Spirit*, 11.2. See Mt.12.18–21.

42.5–17: God's glorious victory. **5:** God is creator of all (40.21–22) and source of life (Gen. 2.7; Acts 17.24–25). **6–9:** God illumines history. **6–7:** He has called Israel, his covenant people, to bring *light* to the nations groping in the darkness of ignorance (60.1–3; Lk.2.30–32; Acts 13.47; 26.23). **8:** LORD, Yahweh, the only God (41.23–24; Dt.4.23–24). **10–13:** Song of victory

⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth
I tell you of them."

¹⁰ Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise from the end of the earth!

Let the sea roar" and all that fills it,
the coastlands and their inhabitants.

¹¹ Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice,
the villages that Kedar inhabits;
let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy,

let them shout from the top of the mountains.

¹² Let them give glory to the LORD,
and declare his praise in the coastlands.

¹³ The LORD goes forth like a mighty man,
like a man of war he stirs up his fury;
he cries out, he shouts aloud,
he shows himself mighty against his foes.

¹⁴ For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in travail,
I will gasp and pant.

¹⁵ I will lay waste mountains and hills,
and dry up all their herbage;
I will turn the rivers into islands,
and dry up the pools.

¹⁶ And I will lead the blind
in a way that they know not,
in paths that they have not known
I will guide them.

I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.
These are the things I will do,
and I will not forsake them.

¹⁷ They shall be turned back and utterly put to shame,
who trust in graven images,
who say to molten images,
"You are our gods."

¹⁸ Hear, you deaf;
and look, you blind, that you may see!

¹⁹ Who is blind but my servant,
or deaf as my messenger whom I send?

Who is blind as my dedicated one,
or blind as the servant of the LORD?

²⁰ He sees^v many things, but does not observe them;
his ears are open, but he does not hear.

²¹ The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness' sake,
to magnify his law and make it glorious.

²² But this is a people robbed and plundered,
they are all of them trapped in holes
and hidden in prisons;
they have become a prey with none to rescue,
a spoil with none to say,
"Restore!"

²³ Who among you will give ear to this,
will attend and listen for the time to come?

²⁴ Who gave up Jacob to the spoiler,
and Israel to the robbers?
Was it not the LORD, against whom
we have sinned,

^v Cn Compare Ps 96.11; 98.7: Heb *Those who go down to the sea* ^w Heb *you see*

(Pss. 93; 96; 149). *Kedar* (Jer.49.28-29) and *Sela* (see Jer.49.20) represent remote and isolated places; all the world praises God, the victorious warrior (Ex.15.1-18; Jg.5.2-5). **14-17:** God's intervention in history. *Long time*, from creation (v. 5) to redemption (vv. 14-16). **15:** Jer.4.23-28. **16:** *Blind*, (vv. 6-7) recalling God's leading Israel safely through the wilderness (41.17-20; Ex.13.21-22).

42.18-43.7: Israel, the blind and deaf servant. **18-25:** Israel's judgment. **19-21:** *Blindness* to God's will and way is, for Second Isaiah, Israel's chief sin (compare 6.9-10). *Law*, better, "teaching," or "revelation" (1.10) concerning the LORD. **23-25:** God has punished Israel for

in whose ways they would not
walk,
and whose law they would not
obey?

- ²⁵ So he poured upon him the heat of
his anger
and the might of battle;
it set him on fire round about, but he
did not understand;
it burned him, but he did not take
it to heart.

43 But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
“Fear not, for I have redeemed
you;

I have called you by name, you
are mine.

- ² When you pass through the waters
I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall
not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall
not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume
you.

- ³ For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your
Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange
for you.

- ⁴ Because you are precious in my
eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life.

- ⁵ Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from
the east,
and from the west I will gather
you;

- ⁶ I will say to the north, Give up,

and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of
the earth,

- ⁷ every one who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.”

- ⁸ Bring forth the people who are blind,
yet have eyes,
who are deaf, yet have ears!

- ⁹ Let all the nations gather together,
and let the peoples assemble.
Who among them can declare this,
and show us the former things?
Let them bring their witnesses to
justify them,
and let them hear and say, It is
true.

- ¹⁰ “You are my witnesses,” says the
LORD,
“and my servant whom I have
chosen,
that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am He.
Before me no god was formed,
nor shall there be any after me.

- ¹¹ I, I am the LORD,
and besides me there is no savior.

- ¹² I declared and saved and
proclaimed,
when there was no strange god
among you;
and you are my witnesses,” says
the LORD.

- ¹³ “I am God, and also henceforth I
am He;
there is none who can deliver from
my hand;
I work and who can hinder it?”

- ¹⁴ Thus says the LORD,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of
Israel:

its sins. **43.1-7:** Israel's redemption (41.8-13). **1-3b:** God is Israel's creator (44.2,21,24) and redeemer (41.14; 43.17; 49.7). *By name*, Israel is God's unique possession (45.3-4; Ex.19.5; 33.17). Through all dangers, God is with his people (Ps.66.12). **3c-7:** God's ransom of Israel includes the nations of Africa (Egypt and Ethiopia) and Arabia (Seba), all of which Cyrus was expected to conquer.

43.8-13: The servant Israel is the LORD's witness. **8:** Israel is capable of conversion. **9:** Who can defend the nations' claims for their gods? **11-13:** Besides God there is and will be no other god (41.23-24; 48.5).

43.14-44.5: The redemption and restoration of Israel. **14-15:** The apposition of *Redeemer*

- "For your sake I will send to
Babylon
and break down all the bars,
and the shouting of the Chalde'ans
will be turned to lamentations.^x
- ¹⁵ I am the LORD, your Holy One,
the Creator of Israel, your King."
- ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷ who brings forth chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched
like a wick:
- ¹⁸ "Remember not the former things,
nor consider the things of old.
- ¹⁹ Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not
perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
- ²⁰ The wild beasts will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹ the people whom I formed for
myself
that they might declare my praise.
- ²² "Yet you did not call upon me, O
Jacob;
but you have been weary of me, O
Israel!
- ²³ You have not brought me your sheep
for burnt offerings,
or honored me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with
offerings,
or wearied you with frankincense.
- ²⁴ You have not bought me sweet cane
with money,
or satisfied me with the fat of your
sacrifices.
But you have burdened me with your
sins,
you have wearied me with your
iniquities.
- ²⁵ "I, I am He
who blots out your transgressions
for my own sake,
and I will not remember your sins.
- ²⁶ Put me in remembrance, let us argue
together;
set forth your case, that you may
be proved right.
- ²⁷ Your first father sinned,
and your mediators transgressed
against me.
- ²⁸ Therefore I profaned the princes of
the sanctuary,
I delivered Jacob to utter
destruction
and Israel to reviling.
- 44** "But now hear, O Jacob my
servant,
Israel whom I have chosen!
- ² Thus says the LORD who made you,
who formed you from the womb
and will help you:
Fear not, O Jacob my servant,
Jeshu'run whom I have chosen.
- ³ For I will pour water on the thirsty
land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my Spirit upon your
descendants,
and my blessing on your offspring.

^x Heb obscure

(v. 1; 54.5; 59.20; Jer.50.34) and *Holy One* (41.14; 47.4; 48.17) is noteworthy. Second Isaiah refers to God as Redeemer more often than do other Old Testament writers. God redeems Israel not for its merits but because of his covenant relationship with Israel. Other nations have kings, but God is Israel's *king* (1 Sam.8.4-9). **16-17**: Allusion to the passage through the Red Sea (Ex.14-15). The "new (and greater) Exodus" is an important theme in Second Isaiah (41.17-20; 42.16; compare Ex.14-15). **18-19**: *New thing*, the return of Israel to Palestine. *A way in the wilderness*. This theme (40.3) is a part of the Exodus story (vv. 16-17). **20-21**: *Water in the wilderness*, see Ex.17.1-7. **22-24**: Israel has ignored and offended God. *Sweet cane*, Ex.30.23; Jer.6.20. **25-28**: The imagery of a lawcourt (41.1); God shows himself gracious, yet just. *First father*, Jacob (Gen. ch. 27; Hos.12.2-4). *Mediators*, perhaps other patriarchal figures or prophets (1 Kg.13.11-32). **44.1-2**: *Jeshurun* (Dt.32.15; 33.5,26), a poetic name of endearment for Israel; it may mean "dearest upright one." **3-4**: Israel, like the world of nature, will be transformed.

⁴ They shall spring up like grass amid waters,^y

like willows by flowing streams.

⁵ This one will say, 'I am the LORD's,'
another will call himself by the
name of Jacob,
and another will write on his hand,
'The LORD's,'
and surname himself by the name
of Israel."

⁶ Thus says the LORD, the King of
Israel
and his Redeemer, the LORD of
hosts:

"I am the first and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.

⁷ Who is like me? Let him proclaim it,
let him declare and set it forth
before me.

Who has announced from of old the
things to come?^z

Let them tell us^a what is yet to be.

⁸ Fear not, nor be afraid;
have I not told you from of old and
declared it?

And you are my witnesses!

Is there a God besides me?

There is no Rock; I know not any."

⁹ All who make idols are nothing,
and the things they delight in do not
profit; their witnesses neither see nor
know, that they may be put to shame.

¹⁰ Who fashions a god or casts an im-
age, that is profitable for nothing?

¹¹ Behold, all his fellows shall be put
to shame, and the craftsmen are but
men; let them all assemble, let them
stand forth, they shall be terrified, they
shall be put to shame together.

¹² The ironsmith fashions it^b and
works it over the coals; he shapes it
with hammers, and forges it with his

strong arm; he becomes hungry and his
strength fails, he drinks no water and is
faint. ¹³ The carpenter stretches a line,
he marks it out with a pencil; he fash-
ions it with planes, and marks it with a
compass; he shapes it into the figure of
a man, with the beauty of a man, to
dwell in a house. ¹⁴ He cuts down
cedars; or he chooses a holm tree or an
oak and lets it grow strong among the
trees of the forest; he plants a cedar and
the rain nourishes it. ¹⁵ Then it becomes
fuel for a man; he takes a part of it and
warms himself, he kindles a fire and
bakes bread; also he makes a god and
worships it, he makes it a graven image
and falls down before it. ¹⁶ Half of it
he burns in the fire; over the half he eats
flesh, he roasts meat and is satisfied;
also he warms himself and says, "Aha,
I am warm, I have seen the fire!"

¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a
god, his idol; and falls down to it and
worships it; he prays to it and says,
"Deliver me, for thou art my god!"
¹⁸ They know not, nor do they discern;
for he has shut their eyes, so that
they cannot see, and their minds, so that
they cannot understand. ¹⁹ No one con-
siders, nor is there knowledge or dis-
cernment to say, "Half of it I burned
in the fire, I also baked bread on its
coals, I roasted flesh and have eaten;
and shall I make the residue of it an
abomination? Shall I fall down be-
fore a block of wood?" ²⁰ He feeds on
ashes; a deluded mind has led him
astray, and he cannot deliver himself
or say, "Is there not a lie in my right
hand?"

^y Gk Compare Tg: Heb *They shall spring up in among grass*

^z Cn: Heb *from my placing an eternal people and things to come*

^a Tg: Heb *them*

^b Cn: Heb *an axe*

God's *Spirit* brings new life. **5:** All people will identify themselves with Israel and Israel's God. *Write on the hand*, compare Dt.6.8. **6-8:** God's uniqueness (compare vv. 21-23). **6:** Note the apposition of *Redeemer* (43.14; 60.16) and *LORD of hosts* (first of several references in Second Isaiah; 45.13; 47.4). *First . . . last*, 41.4; Rev.1.8,17; 2.8; 22.13. **7:** Perhaps a reference to God's promises to the patriarchs (Gen.12.1-3). **8:** *Rock*, 17.10; Ps.18.2.

44.9-20: Satire against idolatry (interpolated here perhaps in view of vv. 8b and 21; compare 40.18-20; 41.6-7). **9-11:** An idol is not a god but an image. **13-14:** It is made by human craftsmen. **14-20:** The same tree is used for fuel and for carving a god; but Israel does not note this ridiculous inconsistency.

²¹ Remember these things, O Jacob,
and Israel, for you are my servant;
I formed you, you are my servant;
O Israel, you will not be forgotten
by me.

²² I have swept away your
transgressions like a cloud,
and your sins like mist;
return to me, for I have redeemed
you.

²³ Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has
done it;
shout, O depths of the earth;
break forth into singing, O
mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it!
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
and will be glorified in Israel.

²⁴ Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
who formed you from the womb:
"I am the LORD, who made all things,
who stretched out the heavens
alone,
who spread out the earth—Who
was with me?"^c—

²⁵ who frustrates the omens of liars,
and makes fools of diviners;
who turns wise men back,
and makes their knowledge
foolish;

²⁶ who confirms the word of his
servant,
and performs the counsel of his
messengers;
who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be
inhabited,'
and of the cities of Judah, 'They
shall be built,
and I will raise up their ruins';

²⁷ who says to the deep, 'Be dry,
I will dry up your rivers';

²⁸ who says of Cyrus, 'He is my
shepherd,
and he shall fulfil all my purpose';
saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be
built,'
and of the temple, 'Your
foundation shall be laid.' "

45 Thus says the LORD to his
anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations before him
and ungird the loins of kings,
to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:
² "I will go before you
and level the mountains,^d
I will break in pieces the doors of
bronze
and cut asunder the bars of iron,
³ I will give you the treasures of
darkness
and the hoards in secret places,
that you may know that it is I, the
LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by
your name.
⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I surname you, though you do not
know me.
⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;
I gird you, though you do not
know me,
⁶ that men may know, from the rising
of the sun
and from the west, that there is
none besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no
other.

^c Another reading is *who spread out the earth by myself*
^d One ancient MS Gk: *Heb the swellings*

44.21–23: Israel is forgiven and redeemed. (A continuation of vv. 6–8). **22:** Like the morning sun, God, the Redeemer (41.14; 63.9), removes the sin which beclouds Israel. **23:** Let all creation praise the LORD! (Compare Jer.51.48; Rev.12.12; 18.20).

44.24–45.13: The commission of Cyrus. 24–28: An historical-prophetic prologue summarizing the preceding poems, and coming to a climax in God's designating *Cyrus* to be his *shepherd* (term for king, Jer.23.4). **45.1–7:** Charge to Cyrus, God's *anointed* (i.e. messiah), is universal in scope, just as Israel's mission is to all nations. **1:** The only Old Testament passage in which "messiah" refers to a non-Israelite. **2–3:** God has commissioned Cyrus and will assist him in accomplishing his mission (40.4). **4:** *My servant . . . my chosen*, 41.8; 42.1; 44.1; 49.3,5,6. **5–7:** Cyrus is unaware of his charge from God, who alone determines history's course and will

- ⁷ I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe,
I am the LORD, who do all these things.
- ⁸ "Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down
righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation
may sprout forth,^e
and let it cause righteousness to
spring up also;
I the LORD have created it.
- ⁹ "Woe to him who strives with his
Maker,
an earthen vessel with the potter!^f
Does the clay say to him who
fashions it, 'What are you
making?'
or 'Your work has no handles'?"
- ¹⁰ Woe to him who says to a father,
'What are you begetting?'
or to a woman, 'With what are you
in travail?' "
- ¹¹ Thus says the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, and his
Maker:
"Will you question me^g about my
children,
or command me concerning the
work of my hands?"
- ¹² I made the earth,
and created man upon it;
it was my hands that stretched out
the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.
- ¹³ I have aroused him in righteousness,
and I will make straight all his
ways;
he shall build my city
and set my exiles free,
not for price or reward,"
says the LORD of hosts.
- ¹⁴ Thus says the LORD:
"The wealth of Egypt and the
merchandise of Ethiopia,
and the Sabe'ans, men of stature,
shall come over to you and be yours,
they shall follow you;
they shall come over in chains and
bow down to you.
They will make supplication to you,
saying:
'God is with you only, and there
is no other,
no god besides him.' "
- ¹⁵ Truly, thou art a God who hidest
thyself,
O God of Israel, the Savior.
- ¹⁶ All of them are put to shame and
confounded,
the makers of idols go in
confusion together.
- ¹⁷ But Israel is saved by the LORD
with everlasting salvation;
you shall not be put to shame or
confounded
to all eternity.
- ¹⁸ For thus says the LORD,
who created the heavens
(he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it
(he established it;
he did not create it a chaos,
he formed it to be inhabited!):
"I am the LORD, and there is no
other.
- ¹⁹ I did not speak in secret,
in a land of darkness;
I did not say to the offspring of
Jacob,
'Seek me in chaos.'
I the LORD speak the truth,

^e One ancient Ms: Heb *that they may bring forth salvation*

^f Cn: Heb *potsherds or potters*

^g Cn: Heb *Ask me of things to come*

reveal his uniqueness (44.6-8) to all. **8:** A song exulting in the extension of salvation to all. **9-13:** The sovereign power of God. **9-10:** This is the only invective in Second Isaiah; it is directed against those questioning the propriety of Cyrus's messiahship (29.16). **9:** Rom.9.20. **11:** *Children, . . . the work of my hands*, the Gentiles. As Lord of creation and history, God's action should be unquestioned. **12:** 40.12-31; 44.24.

45.14-25: The conversion of the nations (2.2-4; 42.1-4; 55.3-5; Jer.16.19-21). **14-15:** The nations' wealth will pour into Israel; they will acknowledge Israel's God. Earlier the nations listed here served as Israel's ransom (43.3). **14:** 1 Cor.14.25. **16-17:** Idol-makers are condemned (44.9-20), but Israel is saved. **18-19:** The Creator has revealed himself to Israel. *Chaos*, the state

I declare what is right.

- ²⁰ “Assemble yourselves and come,
draw near together,
you survivors of the nations!
They have no knowledge
who carry about their wooden
idols,
and keep on praying to a god
that cannot save.
²¹ Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago?
Who declared it of old?
Was it not I, the LORD?
And there is no other god besides
me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none besides me.
²² “Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no
other.
²³ By myself I have sworn,
from my mouth has gone forth in
righteousness
a word that shall not return:
‘To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear.’
²⁴ “Only in the LORD, it shall be said
of me,
are righteousness and strength;
to him shall come and be ashamed,
all who were incensed against
him.
²⁵ In the LORD all the offspring of
Israel
shall triumph and glory.”

46 Bel bows down, Nebo stoops,
their idols are on beasts and
cattle;
these things you carry are loaded

- as burdens on weary beasts.
² They stoop, they bow down together,
they cannot save the burden,
but themselves go into captivity.
³ “Hearken to me, O house of Jacob,
all the remnant of the house of
Israel,
who have been borne by me from
your birth,
carried from the womb;
⁴ even to your old age I am He,
and to gray hairs I will carry you.
I have made, and I will bear;
I will carry and will save.
⁵ “To whom will you liken me and
make me equal,
and compare me, that we may be
alike?
⁶ Those who lavish gold from the
purse,
and weigh out silver in the scales,
hire a goldsmith, and he makes it
into a god;
then they fall down and worship!
⁷ They lift it upon their shoulders,
they carry it,
they set it in its place, and it
stands there;
it cannot move from its place.
If one cries to it, it does not answer
or save him from his trouble.
⁸ “Remember this and consider,
recall it to mind, you
transgressors,
⁹ remember the former things of
old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like
me,
¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not
yet done,
saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,

of the world before creation (Gen.1.2). **20–21**: The nations’ gods are powerless (44.8; Acts 15.18). **22–25**: Let all nations bow before God and sing his praises! **23**: Compare Rom.14.11; Phil. 2.10–11.

46.1–13: The LORD supports Israel. **1–4**: *Bel*, chief god of Babylon, Bel-Marduk; *Nebo*, the Babylonian god Nabu, son of Marduk (Jer.39.3). The gods must be borne and are incapable of protecting their devotees (37.12–13), but God bears (44.2) and protects his devotees. **5–7**: 40.18–20. **7**: Perhaps a reference to New Year’s festival processions in Babylon (45.20). **8–11**: 45.9–13. **8**: *This*, Israel’s history (44.21). **9**: 41.22–29; 42.8–9.

- and I will accomplish all my purpose;⁷
¹¹ calling a bird of prey from the east,
 the man of my counsel from a far country.
 I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass;
 I have purposed, and I will do it.
¹² "Hearken to me, you stubborn of heart,
 you who are far from deliverance:
¹³ I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off,
 and my salvation will not tarry;
 I will put salvation in Zion,
 for Israel my glory."

- 47** Come down and sit in the dust,
 O virgin daughter of Babylon;
 sit on the ground without a throne,
 O daughter of the Chalde'ans!
 For you shall no more be called
 tender and delicate.
² Take the millstones and grind meal,
 put off your veil,
 strip off your robe, uncover your legs,
 pass through the rivers.
³ Your nakedness shall be uncovered,
 and your shame shall be seen.
 I will take vengeance,
 and I will spare no man.
⁴ Our Redeemer—the LORD of hosts is
 his name—
 is the Holy One of Israel.

- ⁵ Sit in silence, and go into darkness,
 O daughter of the Chalde'ans;
 for you shall no more be called
 the mistress of kingdoms.
⁶ I was angry with my people,
 I profaned my heritage;
 I gave them into your hand,
 you showed them no mercy;

- on the aged you made your yoke
 exceedingly heavy.
⁷ You said, "I shall be mistress for ever,"
 so that you did not lay these things
 to heart
 or remember their end.
⁸ Now therefore hear this, you lover
 of pleasures,
 who sit securely,
 who say in your heart,
 "I am, and there is no one besides
 me;
 I shall not sit as a widow
 or know the loss of children":
⁹ These two things shall come to you
 in a moment, in one day;
 the loss of children and widowhood
 shall come upon you in full
 measure,
 in spite of your many sorceries
 and the great power of your
 enchantments.
¹⁰ You felt secure in your wickedness,
 you said, "No one sees me";
 your wisdom and your knowledge
 led you astray,
 and you said in your heart,
 "I am, and there is no one besides
 me."
¹¹ But evil shall come upon you,
 for which you cannot atone;
 disaster shall fall upon you,
 which you will not be able to
 expiate;
 and ruin shall come on you suddenly,
 of which you know nothing.
¹² Stand fast in your enchantments
 and your many sorceries,
 with which you have labored from
 your youth;
 perhaps you may be able to succeed,

11: *Bird of prey*, a reference to Cyrus (41.2; 44.28). **12–13:** Only God can save; unbelievers take note!

47.1–15: Lamentation over Babylon. **1–4:** God strips Babylon of her royalty. **1:** *Virgin daughter*, unconquered (used of Jerusalem, 37.22; Israel, Jer.31.4; Egypt, Jer.46.11). **2:** *Grind meal*, do the work of slaves. **3:** Hos.2.9–12; Jer.13.20–27; Nah.3.5. **5–7:** Babylon's pride condemned. She wrongly attributed her strength to herself; it came from God (Jer.27.6–7; 25.12–14). **8–9:** Babylon's sense of security is illusory. **8:** *I am . . .*, an arrogant presumption of divinity (42.8; 44.6). **9:** Jer.10.17–22; 15.5–9; Rev.18.8. **10–11:** *Wisdom and knowledge* (e.g. divination,

perhaps you may inspire terror.
¹³ You are wearied with your many
 counsels;
 let them stand forth and save you,
 those who divide the heavens,
 who gaze at the stars,
 who at the new moons predict
 what^h shall befall you.

¹⁴ Behold, they are like stubble,
 the fire consumes them;
 they cannot deliver themselves
 from the power of the flame.
 No coal for warming oneself is this,
 no fire to sit before!

¹⁵ Such to you are those with whom
 you have labored,
 who have trafficked with you from
 your youth;
 they wander about each in his own
 direction;
 there is no one to save you.

48 Hear this, O house of Jacob,
 who are called by the name of
 Israel,
 and who came forth from the loinsⁱ
 of Judah;
 who swear by the name of the LORD,
 and confess the God of Israel,
 but not in truth or right.

² For they call themselves after the
 holy city,
 and stay themselves on the God of
 Israel;
 the LORD of hosts is his name.

³ "The former things I declared of old,
 they went forth from my mouth
 and I made them known;
 then suddenly I did them and they
 came to pass.

⁴ Because I know that you are
 obstinate,
 and your neck is an iron sinew
 and your forehead brass,
⁵ I declared them to you from of old,
 before they came to pass I
 announced them to you,
 lest you should say, 'My idol did
 them,
 my graven image and my molten
 image commanded them.'

⁶ "You have heard; now see all this;
 and will you not declare it?
 From this time forth I make you
 hear new things,
 hidden things which you have not
 known.

⁷ They are created now, not long ago;
 before today you have never
 heard of them,
 lest you should say, 'Behold, I
 knew them.'

⁸ You have never heard, you have
 never known,
 from of old your ear has not been
 opened.
 For I knew that you would deal very
 treacherously,
 and that from birth you were called
 a rebel.

⁹ "For my name's sake I defer my
 anger,
 for the sake of my praise I restrain
 it for you,
 that I may not cut you off.

¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not
 like^j silver;
 I have tried you in the furnace of
 affliction.

^h Gk Syr Compare Vg: Heb *from what*
ⁱ Cn: Heb *waters* ^j Cn: Heb *with*

astrology, magic; vv. 12–13) fail to reveal her approaching fall (*you know nothing*). **14–15:** Like stubble in a fire, so Babylon will be consumed; both vassals and allies will desert her (Jer.2.33–37; 4.29–31).

48.1–22: Hear and see. This chapter summarizes the first section of Second Isaiah, which it concludes. It emphasizes the control of God over history and his action within it. **1–2:** The close relationship between God and his undeserving people (*not in truth or right*). **3–5:** God's prophets announced future events to preclude Israel's wrongly ascribing them to other forces (*idol; molten image*). *Former things*, 41.22–29; 43.9–12; 45.21. Israel's obstinacy is frequently deplored (Ex.32.9; Dt.9.13; Jer.5.5; 7.26). **6–8:** *New things*, Israel's deliverance by Cyrus (43.18–19). God's goodness is renewed daily, but Israel's unfaithfulness is almost axiomatic (Ezek.2.6–8; Dt.32.5). **9–10:** The glory of God is the purpose of Israel's salvation (Ezek.20.22).

- ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake,
I do it,
for how should my name^k be
profaned?
My glory I will not give to another.
- ¹² "Hearken to me, O Jacob,
and Israel, whom I called!
I am He, I am the first,
and I am the last.
- ¹³ My hand laid the foundation of the
earth,
and my right hand spread out the
heavens;
when I call to them,
they stand forth together.
- ¹⁴ "Assemble, all of you, and hear!
Who among them has declared
these things?
The LORD loves him;
he shall perform his purpose on
Babylon,
and his arm shall be against the
Chalde'ans.
- ¹⁵ I, even I, have spoken and called
him,
I have brought him, and he will
prosper in his way.
- ¹⁶ Draw near to me, hear this:
from the beginning I have not
spoken in secret,
from the time it came to be I have
been there."
And now the Lord God has sent me
and his Spirit.
- ¹⁷ Thus says the LORD,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of
Israel:
"I am the LORD your God,
who teaches you to profit,
who leads you in the way you
should go.
- ¹⁸ O that you had hearkened to my
commandments!
Then your peace would have been
like a river,
and your righteousness like the
waves of the sea;
¹⁹ your offspring would have been like
the sand,
and your descendants like its
grains;
their name would never be cut off
or destroyed from before me."
- ²⁰ Go forth from Babylon, flee from
Chalde'a,
declare this with a shout of joy,
proclaim it,
send it forth to the end of the earth;
say, "The LORD has redeemed his
servant Jacob!"
- ²¹ They thirsted not when he led
them through the deserts;
he made water flow for them from
the rock;
he cleft the rock and the water
gushed out.
- ²² "There is no peace," says the
LORD, "for the wicked."

- 49** Listen to me, O coastlands,
and hearken, you peoples
from afar.
The LORD called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he
named my name.
² He made my mouth like a sharp
sword,
in the shadow of his hand he
hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
³ And he said to me, "You are my
servant,

^k Gk Old Latin: Heb lacks my name

Furnace, the Exile; earlier used to refer to the Egyptian bondage (Dt.4.20; Jer.11.4). **12-13:** *I am He . . . the first . . . the last*, emphasizing God's oneness, uniqueness, and eternity (43.10; 44.6; Rev.1.17; 2.8; 22.13). **14-15:** *You, Israel; them, idols; him, Cyrus*. **16:** *It*, the creation. **17:** *Teaches and leads*, description of God's historic relationship with Israel (55.12; Ex.13.18; Dt.29.5; Ps.27.11). **18-19:** Ps.81.13-16. *Peace* in the Biblical sense is the state of physical and spiritual well-being within the covenant relationship. *Sand*, Gen.22.17. **20-22:** The prophet sees Israel's deliverance as the Exodus (Ex.17.1-7; Jer.31.10). **22:** 57.21.

49.1-6: The second Servant Song (see 42.1-4 n.). **1-3:** The servant (Israel) speaks. **1:** *Listen*, 41.1. *Called . . . my name*, Jer.1.5; Gal.1.15. **2:** *Sharp sword*, Eph.6.17; Heb.4.12. **3-4:** In serving

- Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”
- ⁴ But I said, “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God.”
- ⁵ And now the LORD says, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—
- ⁶ he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”
- ⁷ Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”
- ⁸ Thus says the LORD: “In a time of favor I have answered you,
- in a day of salvation I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages; ⁹ saying to the prisoners, ‘Come forth,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’ They shall feed along the ways, on all bare heights shall be their pasture; ¹⁰ they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall smite them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.
- ¹¹ And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be raised up.
- ¹² Lo, these shall come from afar, and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.”
- ¹³ Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his afflicted.
- ¹⁴ But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me.”
- ¹⁵ “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no

I Cn: Heb Sinim

God, Israel will be glorified. Though his ministry appears futile, his reward is in God (1 Kg.19.4–18; Jer.15.15–21). 5–6: The life and mission of old and new Israel are contrasted (compare Acts 13.47; 26.23). *Light*, 42.6.

49.7–26: Return and restoration. 7: The Servant of the nations is served by them (some take this verse with vv. 1–6). God’s historic faithfulness is Israel’s assurance. **8–9b:** Though in bondage as in Egypt (48.10), they will be released and restored (compare 2 Cor.6.2). **9c–11:** The imagery of the Exodus (48.20–22) is combined with that of Israel’s deliverance (40.3–4,11). **12:** *Syene*, see Ezek.29.10 n. **13:** Hymn praising God, the Comforter (44.23). **14–16:** God pro-

- compassion on the son of her womb?
 Even these may forget,
 yet I will not forget you.
- ¹⁶ Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands;
 your walls are continually before me.
- ¹⁷ Your builders outstrip your destroyers,
 and those who laid you waste go forth from you.
- ¹⁸ Lift up your eyes round about and see;
 they all gather, they come to you.
 As I live, says the LORD,
 you shall put them all on as an ornament,
 you shall bind them on as a bride does.
- ¹⁹ "Surely your waste and your desolate places
 and your devastated land—
 surely now you will be too narrow
 for your inhabitants,
 and those who swallowed you up
 will be far away.
- ²⁰ The children born in the time of
 your bereavement
 will yet say in your ears:
 'The place is too narrow for me;
 make room for me to dwell in.'
- ²¹ Then you will say in your heart:
 'Who has borne me these?
 I was bereaved and barren,
 exiled and put away,
 but who has brought up these?
 Behold, I was left alone;
 whence then have these come?' "
- ²² Thus says the Lord God:
 "Behold, I will lift up my hand to
 the nations,
 and raise my signal to the peoples;
- and they shall bring your sons in
 their bosom,
 and your daughters shall be
 carried on their shoulders.
- ²³ Kings shall be your foster fathers,
 and their queens your nursing
 mothers.
 With their faces to the ground they
 shall bow down to you,
 and lick the dust of your feet.
 Then you will know that I am the
 LORD;
 those who wait for me shall not be
 put to shame."
- ²⁴ Can the prey be taken from the
 mighty,
 or the captives of a tyrant^m be
 rescued?
- ²⁵ Surely, thus says the LORD:
 "Even the captives of the mighty
 shall be taken,
 and the prey of the tyrant be
 rescued,
 for I will contend with those who
 contend with you,
 and I will save your children.
- ²⁶ I will make your oppressors eat their
 own flesh,
 and they shall be drunk with their
 own blood as with wine.
 Then all flesh shall know
 that I am the LORD your Savior,
 and your Redeemer, the Mighty
 One of Jacob."
- 50** Thus says the LORD:
 "Where is your mother's bill
 of divorce,
 with which I put her away?
 Or which of my creditors is it
 to whom I have sold you?
 Behold, for your iniquities you were
 sold,

^m One ancient Ms Syr Vg: Heb *righteous man*

tests his love for Israel (Hos.2.14-23; Jer.31.20). *Graven you*, as a tattoo. **18**: As if studded with jewels (28.1,3,5), ruined Jerusalem will be repopulated. **20-21**: She (Zion) who had no hope for children will have more inhabitants than room for them (Jer.31.15-17). *Children*, those born during the Exile. **22-23**: A *signal* (fire, 30.17; Jer.6.1) announces, not an invasion (5.26; 13.2; 18.3), but the beginning of Judah's restoration (11.10,12; 62.10). Those who oppress God's people will become their servants. **24-26**: God will free helpless captive Israel (9.20). All the earth will acknowledge Israel's God (1.24; 60.16).

50.1-3: Covenant, faithfulness, and judgment. **1**: Exiled Israel is neither divorced (Dt.24.1-4)

and for your transgressions your
mother was put away.
² Why, when I came, was there no
man?
 When I called, was there no one
to answer?
 Is my hand shortened, that it
cannot redeem?
 Or have I no power to deliver?
 Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the
sea,
 I make the rivers a desert;
 their fish stink for lack of water,
 and die of thirst.
³ I clothe the heavens with blackness,
and make sackcloth their
covering."
⁴ The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of those who are
taught,
that I may know how to sustain with
a word
him that is weary.
 Morning by morning he wakens,
he wakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.
⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I turned not backward.
⁶ I gave my back to the smiters,
and my cheeks to those who
pulled out the beard;
 I hid not my face
from shame and spitting.
⁷ For the Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been
confounded;
 therefore I have set my face like a
flint,

and I know that I shall not be put
to shame;
⁸ he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
 Let us stand up together.
 Who is my adversary?
 Let him come near to me.
⁹ Behold, the Lord GOD helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
 Behold, all of them will wear out like
a garment;
 the moth will eat them up.
¹⁰ Who among you fears the LORD
and obeys the voice of his servant,
who walks in darkness
and has no light,
yet trusts in the name of the LORD
and relies upon his God?
¹¹ Behold, all you who kindle a fire,
who set brands alight!"
 Walk by the light of your fire,
and by the brands which you have
kindled!
 This shall you have from my hand:
you shall lie down in torment.

51 "Hearken to me, you who pursue
deliverance,
you who seek the LORD;
look to the rock from which you were
hewn,
and to the quarry from which you
were digged.
² Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for when he was but one I called him,
and I blessed him and made him
many.
³ For the LORD will comfort Zion;

n Syr: Heb gird yourselves with brands

nor irretrievably sold into slavery (52.3; Ex.21.7) but punished for her unfaithfulness (Hos.2.4-9; Jer. ch. 3; Ezek. ch. 16). **2-3:** When God appeared in his mighty acts or spoke through his prophets, no one responded.

50.4-11: The third Servant Song (see 42.1-4 n.). **4-6:** Taught by God (Jer.1.4-10), the Servant conscientiously brings God's comfort to his fellow Israelites (the *weary*) who treat him despicably (52.13-53.12). Here the prophet may be identifying himself with the Servant (Jer.11.18; compare Lk.2.32; Acts 13.47; 26.23). **7-9:** Using law court terminology, the Servant expresses unshakable confidence that God will vindicate him (Jer.1.18-19; 17.17-18; Ezek.3.7-11; Rom.8.33). **10-11:** God leads his Servant safely through the darkness of his faithless people's rejection; they who walk by their own lights will be punished.

51.1-16: Salvation for Abraham's children. 1-8: Past revelation and future salvation. **1-3:** As with his promises to Abraham (Gen.12.1-3), God will fulfil his promised salvation of Zion (49.20-21). **1:** *Rock, quarry*, symbols of Israel's solidarity. **2:** The only reference to *Sarah* in

he will comfort all her waste
places,
and will make her wilderness like
Eden,
her desert like the garden of the
LORD;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴ "Listen to me, my people,
and give ear to me, my nation;
for a law will go forth from me,
and my justice for a light to the
peoples.

⁵ My deliverance draws near speedily,
my salvation has gone forth,
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.

⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like
smoke,
the earth will wear out like a
garment,
and they who dwell in it will die
like gnats;^o
but my salvation will be for ever,
and my deliverance will never be
ended.

⁷ "Hearken to me, you who know
righteousness,
the people in whose heart is my
law;
fear not the reproach of men,
and be not dismayed at their
revilings.

⁸ For the moth will eat them up like
a garment,
and the worm will eat them like
wool;
but my deliverance will be for ever,

and my salvation to all
generations."

⁹ Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the LORD;
awake, as in days of old,
the generations of long ago.
Was it not thou that didst cut Rahab
in pieces,
that didst pierce the dragon?

¹⁰ Was it not thou that didst dry up the
sea,
the waters of the great deep;
that didst make the depths of the
sea a way
for the redeemed to pass over?

¹¹ And the ransomed of the LORD
shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their
heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee
away.

¹² "I, I am he that comforts you;
who are you that you are afraid
of man who dies,
of the son of man who is made
like grass,

¹³ and have forgotten the LORD, your
Maker,
who stretched out the heavens
and laid the foundations of the
earth,
and fear continually all the day
because of the fury of the
oppressor,
when he sets himself to destroy?
And where is the fury of the
oppressor?

¹⁴ He who is bowed down shall
speedily be released;

^o Or in like manner

the Old Testament outside of Genesis. **3:** *Eden, garden of the LORD*; the symbolism of creation appears often in Biblical pictures of the new age. The end-time will be a return to the ideal conditions in Eden (see Ezek.36.35; 47.1-12). **4-6:** Salvation is imminent. **4:** *Law* (revealed teaching, 1.10) and *justice* (42.4) recall First Isaiah (1.21; 5.7). **5:** *Arms*, 40.10. **6:** Mt.24.35. **9-16:** Prayer of lament and assuring answer (for pattern of vv. 1-8,9-16, compare 26.8-14, 16-21; 49.14-23,24-26; Jer.15.10,15-21). **9-11:** Plea for God's intervention, using the Hebrew version of the primeval combat between God and chaos-monsters (*Rahab*, 30.7; *dragon* [Hebrew, "tannin"], 27.1; Ezek.29.3; *sea* [Hebrew, "yam"], Job 38.8; *deep* [Hebrew, "tehom"], Ezek.26.19; Job 38.16). **12-14:** What mortal man can compete with the omnipotent and eternal God (Ps.

- he shall not die and go down to the Pit,
neither shall his bread fail.
- ¹⁵ For I am the LORD your God,
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—
the LORD of hosts is his name.
- ¹⁶ And I have put my words in your mouth,
and hid you in the shadow of my hand,
stretching out^p the heavens
and laying the foundations of the earth,
and saying to Zion, 'You are my people.'"
- ¹⁷ Rouse yourself, rouse yourself,
stand up, O Jerusalem,
you who have drunk at the hand of the LORD
the cup of his wrath,
who have drunk to the dregs
the bowl of staggering.
- ¹⁸ There is none to guide her
among all the sons she has borne;
there is none to take her by the hand
among all the sons she has brought up.
- ¹⁹ These two things have befallen you—
who will condole with you?—
devastation and destruction, famine and sword;
who will comfort you?^q
- ²⁰ Your sons have fainted,
they lie at the head of every street
like an antelope in a net;
they are full of the wrath of the LORD,
the rebuke of your God.
- ²¹ Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted,

- who are drunk, but not with wine:
- ²² Thus says your Lord, the LORD,
your God who pleads the cause of his people:
"Behold, I have taken from your hand
the cup of staggering;
the bowl of my wrath
you shall drink no more;
²³ and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors,
who have said to you,
'Bow down, that we may pass over';
and you have made your back like the ground
and like the street for them to pass over."

52 Awake, awake,
put on your strength, O Zion;
put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city;
for there shall no more come into you
the uncircumcised and the unclean.

- ² Shake yourself from the dust, arise,
O captive^r Jerusalem;
loose the bonds from your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion.

³ For thus says the LORD: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money. ⁴ For thus says the Lord God: My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. ⁵ Now therefore what have I here, says the LORD, seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail, says the LORD, and continually all the day my

^p Syr: Heb *plant*

^q One ancient Ms Gk Syr Vg: Heb *how may I comfort you*

^r Cn: Heb *sit*

90.5)? *Bowed down*, as a prisoner. *Pit*, Sheol (14.9–11). **15–16:** *Your God . . . my people* re-emphasizes the covenant relationship (40.1). **15:** Jer.31.35.

51.17–52.12: *God's kingship*. **17–20:** Jerusalem has drunk deeply of *the cup of God's wrath* (Jer.25.15–31) and lies exhausted, depopulated, and destroyed. **21–23:** But now her oppressors will drink of it (41.1–42.4; 45.20–25). **52.1–2:** Jerusalem is bidden to arise (51.17). *Uncircumcised and unclean* refers to foreigners (33.19) and ritually unclean Jews. **3–6:** A prose interpolation. *Name* is more than appellation; it involves the person himself (compare Ex.20.7). God will not allow himself to be contemned by his people's oppressors: Egypt (Ezek.29.9), Assyria

name is despised. ⁶ Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I."

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

⁸ Hark, your watchmen lift up their voice, together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹ Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem; for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

¹¹ Depart, depart, go out thence, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

¹² For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

¹³ Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up,

and shall be very high.

¹⁴ As many were astonished at him^s—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men—

¹⁵ so shall he startle^t many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.

53 Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected^u by men; a man of sorrows,^v and acquainted with grief;^w and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs^x and carried our sorrows;^y yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions,

^s Syr Tg: Heb you

^t The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^u Or forsaken ^v Or pains ^w Or sickness

^x Or sicknesses ^y Or pains

(10.7–11), Babylon (Jer.50.29). **7–8:** Tensely, all creation awaits word of God's decisive victory (Ps.125.2; 2 Sam.18.25–27; Nah.1.15; Rom.10.15). The *watchmen* see the victor returning (40.5). **11–12:** Ritually clean, people and priests return home in peace (Ex.13.21–22).

52.13–53.12: The fourth Servant Song (see 42.1–4 n.). **52.13–15:** God will exalt his brutally disfigured Servant (Israel) to the numbed astonishment of the world's rulers (49.7,23). **15:** Rom.15.21. **53.1–3:** A lament (40.12; 50.8–10). The Servant's background and appearance (52.14) are undistinguished; his person, rejected. **1:** Jn.12.38. **2:** *Young plant*, compare 11.1; *root*, 11.10, compare Jer.23.5; these are sometimes considered Messianic allusions. **3:** Like a leper, he suffers painful loneliness and rejection by the community (Job 19.13–19). **4–6:** By the Servant's vicarious suffering, he restores all people to God (Mt.8.17; 1 Pet.2.24–25). *Whole*,

he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that
made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.
⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his
own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was
afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the
slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its
shearers is dumb,
so he opened not his mouth.
⁸ By oppression and judgment he was
taken away;
and as for his generation, who
considered
that he was cut off out of the land
of the living,
stricken for the transgression of
my people?
⁹ And they made his grave with the
wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his
mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to
bruise him;
he has put him to grief;^z
when he makes himself^a an offering
for sin,
he shall see his offspring, he shall
prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper
in his hand;
¹¹ he shall see the fruit of the travail
of his soul and be satisfied;

by his knowledge shall the righteous
one, my servant,
make many to be accounted
righteous;
and he shall bear their iniquities.
¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion
with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with
the strong;
because he poured out his soul to
death,
and was numbered with the
transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the
transgressors.

54 "Sing, O barren one, who did
not bear;
break forth into singing and cry
aloud,
you who have not been in travail!
For the children of the desolate one
will be more
than the children of her that is
married, says the LORD.
² Enlarge the place of your tent,
and let the curtains of your
habitations be stretched out;
hold not back, lengthen your cords
and strengthen your stakes.
³ For you will spread abroad to the
right and to the left,
and your descendants will possess
the nations
and will people the desolate cities.
⁴ "Fear not, for you will not be
ashamed;
be not confounded, for you will
not be put to shame;
for you will forget the shame of your
youth,

^z Heb made him sick

^a Vg: Heb thou makest his soul

general well-being ("peace," 48.18). **7-9:** Unlike Jeremiah (11.18-12.6) or Job, the Servant suffers silently. He is unjustly condemned (compare Lk.22.37), executed, and ignominiously buried (compare Mt.27.57-60). See Acts 8.32-33. **9b:** Some emend to read, "and his tomb with evildoers" (others read "with demons [satyrs]"). **10-12:** The Servant's suffering manifests God's judgment (against sin) and mercy (upon sinful man). Israel, Abraham's "child," brings blessings to many. The poem describes the purpose of God's people, the covenant community.

54.1-17: Song of assurance to Israel. **1-3:** 49.14-21. **1:** *Barren*, exilic Zion, deserted by God, her "husband" (Ezek. ch. 16); *married*, pre-exilic Zion (62.4; Gal.4.27). **4-8:** God, the faithful husband. **4:** *Shame . . . youth*, pre-exilic infidelity; *widowhood*, the Exile. **6:** God will not irrev-

- and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.
- ⁵ For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.
- ⁶ For the LORD has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God.
- ⁷ For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you.
- ⁸ In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer.
- ⁹ "For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you.
- ¹⁰ For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you.
- ¹¹ "O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony,
- and lay your foundations with sapphires.^b
- ¹² I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, and all your wall of precious stones.
- ¹³ All your sons shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the prosperity of your sons.
- ¹⁴ In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.
- ¹⁵ If any one stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you.
- ¹⁶ Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals, and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy;
- ¹⁷ no weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, says the LORD."
- 55** "Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

^b Or lapis lazuli

ocably reject his "wife" (Hos.2.19; 11.8-9). **7:** Reconciliation is imminent (Ps.27.10; 2 Cor. 4.17-18). **8:** God's *everlasting love* for his people (43.4; Jer.31.3; a parent's love, 49.14-16; Jer.31.20; a husband's love, Jer.2.2; Ezek.16.8) is unmerited and unwaveringly faithful. **9-10:** The everlasting covenant (Jer.32.40). **9:** Gen.8.21-22; 9.11-17. **10:** Jer.31.35-36; Mk.13.31; *covenant of peace*, 48.18; Ezek.34.25. **11-14:** New Jerusalem (*afflicted one*, compare 51.21) is Paradise restored (Ezek.28.13-19; Jn.6.45; Rev.21.19). **15:** Commentary on v. 14. **17:** No one can assault God's *servants* with impunity (65.13-15).

55.1-13: A hymn of joy and triumph, celebrating the approaching consummation of Israel's restoration. This concludes the first section of Second Isaiah. **1-2:** Reminiscent of wisdom's

- ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in fatness.
- ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.
- ⁴ Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.
- ⁵ Behold, you shall call nations that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

- ¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
- ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.
- ¹² "For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
- ¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off."

56 Thus says the LORD:
"Keep justice, and do righteousness,
for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.

- ² Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast,
who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it,
and keeps his hand from doing any evil."

invitation to a banquet (Pr.9.3-6; compare Jn.7.37); God's grace cannot be purchased. 3-5: God's promise to David (2 Sam.7.4-17) continues in the *everlasting covenant* (54.9-10; Jer. 33.19-26; compare Jer.31.31-34). Emphasis is on Israel's messianism, not Davidic messianism. 6-9: A call to repentance (Jer.29.12-14; Mt.3.2) and trust in God's inscrutable grace (Ps.103.11; Rom.11.33-36). 10-11: As *rain* causes germination and ultimately provides sustenance, so does God's word (see 9.8). 12-13: The new Exodus (compare 43.16-21; 49.9-11) into an Eden-like land (see 51.3 n.; 41.18,19; 44.3-4).

56.1-66.24: Miscellaneous post-restoration oracles (after 538 B.C.; see Introduction, p. 822). 56.1-8: A blessing on all who keep the sabbath (compare 58.13-14; Jer.17.19-27). 2: *Blessed*

³ Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say,
"The LORD will surely separate me from his people";
and let not the eunuch say,
"Behold, I am a dry tree."

⁴ For thus says the LORD:
"To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths,
who choose the things that please me
and hold fast my covenant,

⁵ I will give in my house and within my walls
a monument and a name better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
which shall not be cut off.

⁶ "And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
every one who keeps the sabbath,
and does not profane it,
and holds fast my covenant—

⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

⁸ Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather yet others to him
besides those already gathered."^c

⁹ All you beasts of the field, come to devour—

all you beasts in the forest.

¹⁰ His watchmen are blind,
they are all without knowledge;
they are all dumb dogs,
they cannot bark;
dreaming, lying down,
loving to slumber.

¹¹ The dogs have a mighty appetite;
they never have enough.
The shepherds also have no understanding;
they have all turned to their own way,

each to his own gain, one and all.

¹² "Come," they say, "let us^d get wine,
let us fill ourselves with strong drink;
and tomorrow will be like this day,
great beyond measure."

57 The righteous man perishes,
and no one lays it to heart;
devout men are taken away,
while no one understands.

For the righteous man is taken away
from calamity,

² he enters into peace;
they rest in their beds
who walk in their uprightness.

³ But you, draw near hither,
sons of the sorceress,
offspring of the adulterer and the harlot.

⁴ Of whom are you making sport?
Against whom do you open your mouth wide
and put out your tongue?

Are you not children of transgression,
the offspring of deceit,

⁵ you who burn with lust among the oaks,

^c Heb his gathered ones

^d One ancient Ms Syr Vg Tg: Heb me

is the man, compare Ps.1.1; Jer.17.7; Mt.5.2-12. **3:** *Foreigner*, the reference is to the proselyte (see v. 6). **4-5:** God himself will honor faithful *eunuchs*. **6-7:** Faithful proselytes will present acceptable sacrifices; *house of prayer*, Mk.11.17; *for all people*, 60.1-14. **8:** God's community includes Israel and proselytes.

56.9-12: Against corrupt leaders. **9:** *Beasts*, nations (Jer.12.8-9; Ezek.39.17). **10:** *Watchmen*, prophets (Ezek.3.17; 33.7). **11:** *Shepherds*, rulers (Ezek.34.1; Zech.11.4-17).

57.1-13: Against idolatry. **1-2:** The *righteous* die unnoticed by their hedonistic religious leaders. *Beds*, graves. **3-4:** *You*, i.e. Jerusalem's apostates ("illegitimate children") who abuse the righteous ("legitimate children"; Jer.3.1-20; Ezek.16.1-63). **5-6:** The old fertility cults

- under every green tree;
 who slay your children in the valleys,
 under the clefts of the rocks?
- ⁶ Among the smooth stones of the
 valley is your portion;
 they, they, are your lot;
 to them you have poured out a drink
 offering,
 you have brought a cereal offering.
 Shall I be appeased for these
 things?
- ⁷ Upon a high and lofty mountain
 you have set your bed,
 and thither you went up to offer
 sacrifice.
- ⁸ Behind the door and the doorpost
 you have set up your symbol;
 for, deserting me, you have
 uncovered your bed,
 you have gone up to it,
 you have made it wide;
 and you have made a bargain for
 yourself with them,
 you have loved their bed,
 you have looked on nakedness.^e
- ⁹ You journeyed to Molech^f with oil
 and multiplied your perfumes;
 you sent your envoys far off,
 and sent down even to Sheol.
- ¹⁰ You were wearied with the length of
 your way,
 but you did not say, "It is hope-
 less";
 you found new life for your strength,
 and so you were not faint.
- ¹¹ Whom did you dread and fear,
 so that you lied,
 and did not remember me,
 did not give me a thought?
 Have I not held my peace, even for
 a long time,
 and so you do not fear me?
- ¹² I will tell of your righteousness and
 your doings,
- but they will not help you.
- ¹³ When you cry out, let your collection
 of idols deliver you!
 The wind will carry them off,
 a breath will take them away.
 But he who takes refuge in me shall
 possess the land,
 and shall inherit my holy
 mountain.
- ¹⁴ And it shall be said,
 "Build up, build up, prepare the
 way,
 remove every obstruction from
 my people's way."
- ¹⁵ For thus says the high and lofty One
 who inhabits eternity, whose
 name is Holy:
 "I dwell in the high and holy place,
 and also with him who is of a
 contrite and humble spirit,
 to revive the spirit of the humble,
 and to revive the heart of the
 contrite.
- ¹⁶ For I will not contend for ever,
 nor will I always be angry;
 for from me proceeds the spirit,
 and I have made the breath of
 life.
- ¹⁷ Because of the iniquity of his
 covetousness I was angry,
 I smote him, I hid my face and
 was angry;
 but he went on backsliding in the
 way of his own heart.
- ¹⁸ I have seen his ways, but I will
 heal him;
 I will lead him and requite him
 with comfort,
 creating for his mourners the fruit
 of the lips.
- ¹⁹ Peace, peace, to the far and to the
 near, says the LORD;

^e The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain
^f Or the king

persist. *Oak*, see 6.13 n.; *slay your children*, Jer.19.5; *portion, lot*, the gods of the valleys (v. 6), mountains (v. 7), house (v. 8), and other shrines (vv. 9-10), rather than the true God (Jer.10.16). 7-8: Sexual immorality was characteristic of these cults. 9-10: *Molech*, see Jer.7.31 n.; *to Sheol*, to the gods of the underworld (14.9-11). All such practices are futile (Jer.2.25). 11-13: God rebukes the idolators (42.8); their gods are impotent (42.17; Jer.2.20-28).

57.14-21: Poem of consolation. 14: Compare 40.1-4. 15: God is both distant and near (Jn.1.1-18). 16-21: God's justifiable wrath is not unending. 17: Israel continued to sin despite repeated punishments. 18: Yet the LORD will heal him, by an act of grace. *Mourners*, a reference to those who repent. 19-21: Israel will have peace, but the wicked will not (48.18; Eph.2.17).

and I will heal him.

²⁰ But the wicked are like the tossing sea;
for it cannot rest,
and its waters toss up mire and dirt.

²¹ There is no peace, says my God,
for the wicked."

58 "Cry aloud, spare not,
lift up your voice like a trumpet;
declare to my people their transgression,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet they seek me daily,
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that did righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³ 'Why have we fasted, and thou seest it not?

Why have we humbled ourselves,
and thou takest no knowledge of it?"

Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,^g
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to hit with wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day
will not make your voice to be heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day for a man to humble himself?

Is it to bow down his head like a rush,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?

Will you call this a fast,
and a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ "Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

⁸ Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry, and he will say,
Here I am.

"If you take away from the midst of you the yoke,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

¹⁰ if you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.

¹¹ And the LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your desire with good things,^h
and make your bones strong;

^g Or pursue your own business

^h The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

58.1-14: The LORD does not desire fasting, but kindness and justice; compare Mic.6.6-8; Jas.1.27. **1-5:** Proper motivation is necessary for the acceptance of fasting. **1:** *Trumpet*, the trumpet was used to announce a fast day (Jl.2.15; compare Ezek.33.3). **3:** *Day of your fast*, Lev.23.26-32; Jer.36.9. **5:** *Sackcloth*, worn by mourners (Ezek.7.18), by prisoners (3.24), and by prophets (20.2). **6-9b:** One's relationship to his fellows reveals one's relationship to God (Lk.10.25-37). When appropriate "fruits" are present (social justice, mercy, sharing; Lk.3.8), God will hear (1.10-20; Mt.25.34-40). *Light*, 42.6-7; *rear guard*, 52.12. **9c-12:** God will give his people strength (66.14), abundance (Jer.31.12) and auspicious circumstances for reconstruction

and you shall be like a watered garden,
 like a spring of water,
 whose waters fail not.
¹² And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
 you shall raise up the foundations
 of many generations;
 you shall be called the repairer of
 the breach,
 the restorer of streets to dwell in.
¹³ "If you turn back your foot from
 the sabbath,
 from doing your pleasureⁱ on
 my holy day,
 and call the sabbath a delight
 and the holy day of the LORD
 honorable;
 if you honor it, not going your own
 ways,
 or seeking your own pleasure,ⁱ
 or talking idly;
¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the
 LORD,
 and I will make you ride upon the
 heights of the earth;
 I will feed you with the heritage of
 Jacob your father,
 for the mouth of the LORD has
 spoken."

59 Behold, the LORD's hand is
 not shortened, that it cannot
 save,
 or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;
² but your iniquities have made a
 separation
 between you and your God,
 and your sins have hid his face from
 you
 so that he does not hear.
³ For your hands are defiled with
 blood
 and your fingers with iniquity;

your lips have spoken lies,
 your tongue mutters wickedness.
⁴ No one enters suit justly,
 no one goes to law honestly;
 they rely on empty pleas, they
 speak lies,
 they conceive mischief and bring
 forth iniquity.
⁵ They hatch adders' eggs,
 they weave the spider's web;
 he who eats their eggs dies,
 and from one which is crushed a
 viper is hatched.
⁶ Their webs will not serve as clothing;
 men will not cover themselves
 with what they make.
 Their works are works of iniquity,
 and deeds of violence are in their
 hands.
⁷ Their feet run to evil,
 and they make haste to shed
 innocent blood;
 their thoughts are thoughts of
 iniquity,
 desolation and destruction are in
 their highways.
⁸ The way of peace they know not,
 and there is no justice in their
 paths;
 they have made their roads crooked,
 no one who goes in them knows
 peace.
⁹ Therefore justice is far from us,
 and righteousness does not
 overtake us;
 we look for light, and behold,
 darkness,
 and for brightness, but we walk
 in gloom.
¹⁰ We grope for the wall like the blind,
 we grope like those who have no
 eyes;

ⁱ Or business

^j Or pursuing your own business

(44.26; 61.4). *Point the finger*, gesture of contempt (Pr.6.13). **13-14**: Strict observance of the sabbath was increasingly emphasized in post-exilic Judaism (56.2; Mt.12.1-8).

59.1-21: Call to national repentance. **1-4**: God is not impotent or deaf; Judah's transgressions have broken the covenant (50.1-2). The people are totally given over to wickedness; injustice and dishonesty are rampant (Rom.3.10-18). **5-8**: Graphic continuation of vv. 3-4. The whole community is contaminated (Mt.23.13-36). Synonyms of "ways" in vv. 7-8 (Rom.3.15-17) describe the blind alleys down which Judah is going. **9-11**: Consequently, Judah gropes in the darkness of social and spiritual depravity (13.10; 50.10-11), fear, and foreboding (38.14).

- we stumble at noon as in the twilight,
among those in full vigor we are like dead men.
- 11 We all growl like bears,
we moan and moan like doves;
we look for justice, but there is none;
for salvation, but it is far from us.
- 12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee,
and our sins testify against us;
for our transgressions are with us,
and we know our iniquities:
- 13 transgressing, and denying the LORD,
and turning away from following our God,
speaking oppression and revolt,
conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.
- 14 Justice is turned back,
and righteousness stands afar off;
for truth has fallen in the public squares,
and uprightness cannot enter.
- 15 Truth is lacking,
and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.

- The LORD saw it, and it displeased him
that there was no justice.
- 16 He saw that there was no man,
and wondered that there was no one to intervene;
then his own arm brought him victory,
and his righteousness upheld him.
- 17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation upon his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,

and wrapped himself in fury as a mantle.

- 18 According to their deeds, so will he repay,
wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies;
to the coastlands he will render requital.

- 19 So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun;
for he will come like a rushing stream,
which the wind of the LORD drives.

- 20 "And he will come to Zion as Redeemer,
to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the LORD.

- 21 "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD: my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore."

60 Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

- 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
- 3 And nations shall come to your light,

12-15b: The community confesses the magnitude of its offenses: rebellion (*transgressing*), faithlessness (*denying*), disobedience (*turning away*); its integrity is wholly corrupted. 15c-17: With no human helper available, God himself intervened with every means at his command (42.13; compare Eph.6.14-17). 18-20: God brings judgment upon all his enemies with irresistible fury and might (30.27-28) to redeem repentant Zion (Jerusalem; compare Rom.11.26). 21: A prose oracle assuring Judah of the abiding presence of God's *spirit and words* (44.3-5). 60.1-62.12: Poems on the glory of Jerusalem and of God's people, reminiscent of chapters 40-55. 60.1-22: Jerusalem's glorious restoration. 1-3: Fallen Zion bidden to *arise, shine* (42.6-7), and reflect the *glory of the LORD* (6.3; Ezek.1.4-28; 10.4), which will attract all nations

- and kings to the brightness of your rising.
- ⁴ Lift up your eyes round about, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far,
and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.
- ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant,
your heart shall thrill and rejoice;^k
because the abundance of the sea
shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Mid'ian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.
- ⁷ All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you,
the rams of Nebai'oth shall minister to you;
they shall come up with acceptance on my altar,
and I will glorify my glorious house.
- ⁸ Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their windows?
- ⁹ For the coastlands shall wait for me,
the ships of Tarshish first,
to bring your sons from far,
their silver and gold with them,
for the name of the LORD your God,
and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has glorified you.
- ¹⁰ Foreigners shall build up your walls,
and their kings shall minister to you;
for in my wrath I smote you,
but in my favor I have had mercy on you.
- ¹¹ Your gates shall be open continually;
day and night they shall not be shut;
that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations,
with their kings led in procession.
- ¹² For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish;
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.
- ¹³ The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,
to beautify the place of my sanctuary;
and I will make the place of my feet glorious.
- ¹⁴ The sons of those who oppressed you
shall come bending low to you;
and all who despised you
shall bow down at your feet;
they shall call you the City of the LORD,
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
- ¹⁵ Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,
with no one passing through,
I will make you majestic for ever,
a joy from age to age.
- ¹⁶ You shall suck the milk of nations,
you shall suck the breast of kings;
and you shall know that I, the LORD,
am your Savior

^k Heb be enlarged

(66.18). 4-5: Risen Zion welcomes her children home (49.18ab, 22de); her poverty is replaced by wealth (45.14; 61.6). 6-7: Arabia's riches are brought by camel caravan. *Midian* (see Ex. 2.15 n.), *Ephah*, Arab tribes east of Gulf of Aqabah; *Sheba* (Gen.10.7); *Kedar* (21.16); *Nebai'oth*, an Arab tribe (Gen.25.13). 8-9: Some returning exiles (*sons*) and wealth from the west arrive by ship (v. 8). *Tarshish* (see Jer.10.9 n.). 10-11: Destroyed by foreigners (Jer.52.13-16), the new Jerusalem will be built by foreigners (compare Rev.21.24-27). 13-14: As before (1 Kg.5.8-10) wood from *Lebanon* (41.19) and wealth from the nations will build the temple and holy *City* (35.1-10; 49.26). 15-16: Once forsaken (54.6-7), Zion will be exalted (1.24; Ezek.16.1-63).

and your Redeemer, the Mighty
One of Jacob.

- 17 Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
and instead of iron I will bring
silver;
instead of wood, bronze,
instead of stones, iron.
I will make your overseers peace
and your taskmasters
righteousness.
- 18 Violence shall no more be heard
in your land,
devastation or destruction within
your borders;
you shall call your walls Salvation,
and your gates Praise.
- 19 The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give light to you by night;¹
but the LORD will be your everlasting
light,
and your God will be your glory.
- 20 Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your
everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall
be ended.
- 21 Your people shall all be righteous;
they shall possess the land for
ever,
the shoot of my planting, the work
of my hands,
that I might be glorified.
- 22 The least one shall become a clan,
and the smallest one a mighty
nation;
I am the LORD;
in its time I will hasten it.

because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good tidings to the
afflicted;^m
he has sent me to bind up the
brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prisonⁿ
to those who are bound;
2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's
favor,
and the day of vengeance of our
God;
to comfort all who mourn;
3 to grant to those who mourn in
Zion—
to give them a garland instead of
ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of
mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a
faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of
righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he
may be glorified.

4 They shall build up the ancient
ruins,
they shall raise up the former
devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many
generations.

- 5 Aliens shall stand and feed your
flocks,
foreigners shall be your
plowmen and vinedressers;
6 but you shall be called the priests
of the LORD,
men shall speak of you as the
ministers of our God;
you shall eat the wealth of the
nations,

¹ One ancient Ms Gk Old Latin Tg: Heb lacks *by night*
^m Or *poor*
ⁿ Or *the opening of the eyes*: Heb *the opening*

61 The Spirit of the Lord God is
upon me,

17-18: The new Jerusalem will surpass Solomon's city in beauty and tranquillity. 19-20: God's glory will perpetually illumine the joyful city (35.10; Rev.21.4). 21-22: In the divinely restored city, God will be glorified (9.7; 54.1-2).

61.1-11: The mission to Zion. This poem recalls the Servant Songs of chs. 42-53, especially 50.4-11. 1-3: Lk.4.16-20; compare Mt.11.5; Lk.7.22. God sends his prophet to bring encouragement to the exiled and oppressed; he will make them mighty oaks (60.21; Jer.17.8). *Spirit* is strongly emphasized in exilic and post-exilic writings (42.1; 59.21; Ezek.2.2). 2: *Vengeance*, better, "rescue." 4-5: 60.10-11. 6-7: *Priests* (Ex.19.6). *Double portion*, for double punishment

and in their riches you shall glory.
⁷ Instead of your shame you shall
 have a double portion,
 instead of dishonor you^o shall
 rejoice in your^p lot;
 therefore in your^p land you^o shall
 possess a double portion;
 yours^q shall be everlasting joy.

⁸ For I the LORD love justice,
 I hate robbery and wrong;^r
 I will faithfully give them their
 recompense,
 and I will make an everlasting
 covenant with them.
⁹ Their descendants shall be known
 among the nations,
 and their offspring in the midst of
 the peoples;
 all who see them shall acknowledge
 them,
 that they are a people whom the
 LORD has blessed.

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
 my soul shall exult in my God;
 for he has clothed me with the
 garments of salvation,
 he has covered me with the robe of
 righteousness,
 as a bridegroom decks himself with a
 garland,
 and as a bride adorns herself with
 her jewels.

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its
 shoots,
 and as a garden causes what is
 sown in it to spring up,
 so the Lord God will cause
 righteousness and praise
 to spring forth before all the
 nations.

62 For Zion's sake I will not
 keep silent,

and for Jerusalem's sake I will not
 rest,
 until her vindication goes forth as
 brightness,
 and her salvation as a burning
 torch.

² The nations shall see your
 vindication,
 and all the kings your glory;
 and you shall be called by a new
 name
 which the mouth of the LORD will
 give.

³ You shall be a crown of beauty in
 the hand of the LORD,
 and a royal diadem in the hand
 of your God.

⁴ You shall no more be termed
 Forsaken,^s
 and your land shall no more be
 termed Desolate;^t
 but you shall be called My delight
 is in her,^u
 and your land Married;^v
 for the LORD delights in you,
 and your land shall be married.

⁵ For as a young man marries a
 virgin,
 so shall your sons marry you,
 and as the bridegroom rejoices over
 the bride,
 so shall your God rejoice over
 you.

⁶ Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,
 I have set watchmen;
 all the day and all the night
 they shall never be silent.
 You who put the LORD in
 remembrance,
 take no rest,
⁷ and give him no rest

^o Heb they ^p Heb their
^q Heb theirs ^r Or robbery with a burnt offering
^s Heb Azubah ^t Heb Shemamah
^u Heb Hephzibah ^v Heb Beulah

(40.2). 8-9: In Judah, all nations will see God's faithfulness and his blessing. *Justice*, 5.7,16. *Everlasting covenant*, 54.9-10. 10-11: The prophet identifies himself with Zion and rejoices in her salvation (compare vv. 1-3), which is as certain as the earth's producing vegetation.

62.1-12: The glory of God's people. 1-3: The prophet continues to proclaim Zion's approaching vindication. *New name* denotes a change in status (1.26; Jer.33.16; Ezek.48.35; compare Abram, Abraham, Gen.17.5 notes x and y). *Crown of beauty* (28.1-6). 4-5: New status, new names. *Your sons*, read (with a slight emendation), "your Builder." 6-9: *Watchmen*, probably prophets (52.8; Ezek. ch. 33), to remind Jerusalem of her imminent salvation, the certainty of

until he establishes Jerusalem
and makes it a praise in the earth.

⁸ The LORD has sworn by his right
hand

and by his mighty arm:

"I will not again give your grain
to be food for your enemies,
and foreigners shall not drink your wine

for which you have labored;

⁹ but those who garner it shall eat it
and praise the LORD,
and those who gather it shall drink it
in the courts of my sanctuary."

¹⁰ Go through, go through the gates,
prepare the way for the people;
build up, build up the highway,
clear it of stones,

lift up an ensign over the peoples.

¹¹ Behold, the LORD has proclaimed
to the end of the earth:

Say to the daughter of Zion,

"Behold, your salvation comes;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him."

¹² And they shall be called The holy
people,
The redeemed of the LORD;
and you shall be called Sought out,
a city not forsaken.

63 Who is this that comes from
Edom,
in crimsoned garments from
Bozrah,
he that is glorious in his apparel,
marching in the greatness of his
strength?

"It is I, announcing vindication,
mighty to save."

² Why is thy apparel red,
and thy garments like his that
treads in the wine press?

³ "I have trodden the wine press
alone,
and from the peoples no one
was with me;

I trod them in my anger
and trampled them in my wrath;
their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my
garments,

and I have stained all my raiment.

⁴ For the day of vengeance was in my
heart,
and my year of redemption^w has
come.

⁵ I looked, but there was no one to
help;

I was appalled, but there was no
one to uphold;

so my own arm brought me victory,
and my wrath upheld me.

⁶ I trod down the peoples in my anger,
I made them drunk in my wrath,
and I poured out their lifeblood
on the earth."

⁷ I will recount the steadfast love of
the LORD,
the praises of the LORD,
according to all that the LORD has
granted us,
and the great goodness to the
house of Israel
which he has granted them
according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his
steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, Surely they are my
people,

^w Or the year of my redeemed

which the LORD's oath (vv. 8-9) underscores. *Right hand* (Ex.15.6,12). *Mighty arm* (40.10; Dt.7.19). *Foreigners*, invaders, as the Babylonians, and encroachers, as the Edomites (Ob.13). **10-12:** A summary of the eschatological hopes described in chs. 60-62. **10b:** 49.22. **11b:** 40.10.

63.1-6: Poem on divine vengeance. **1:** The prophet (watchman; see 62.6 n.) challenges him who approaches. *Edom, Bozrah*, symbolic of God's opponents (34.5-7). **2-3:** Compare Jl.3.13; Rev.14.19-20. **4-6:** *Day of vengeance* and *year of redemption* are synchronous. *Drunk*, see Jer.25.15-29; Zech.12.2.

63.7-64.12: Psalm of intercession. **7-14:** Historical prologue recalling Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Israel is called (v. 8; Ex.4.22-23; 19.3-6), protected (v. 9a; Ex.12.1-32), exalted (v. 9b; Ezek. ch. 16), delivered (vv. 11-12; Ex.14.9-15.21; Jer.15.1), and safely led through Sinai into Canaan (vv. 13-14). Israel's rebellion necessitated God's opposing them (Jer.5.20-29). **7:** *Steadfast love* expresses God's continuing covenant loyalty despite Israel's faithlessness.

sons who will not deal falsely;
and he became their Savior.

- ⁹ In all their affliction he was afflicted,^x
and the angel of his presence
saved them;
in his love and in his pity he
redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried
them all the days of old.

- ¹⁰ But they rebelled
and grieved his holy Spirit;
therefore he turned to be their
enemy,
and himself fought against them.

- ¹¹ Then he remembered the days of
old,
of Moses his servant.
Where is he who brought up out of
the sea
the shepherds of his flock?
Where is he who put in the midst of
them

- his holy Spirit,
¹² who caused his glorious arm
to go at the right hand of Moses,
who divided the waters before them
to make for himself an everlasting
name,

- ¹³ who led them through the depths?
Like a horse in the desert,
they did not stumble.

- ¹⁴ Like cattle that go down into the
valley,
the Spirit of the LORD gave them
rest.

So thou didst lead thy people,
to make for thyself a glorious
name.

- ¹⁵ Look down from heaven and see,
from thy holy and glorious
habitation.
Where are thy zeal and thy might?
The yearning of thy heart and
thy compassion

are withheld from me.

- ¹⁶ For thou art our Father,
though Abraham does not know
us
and Israel does not acknowledge
us;
thou, O LORD, art our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is thy
name.

- ¹⁷ O LORD, why dost thou make us err
from thy ways
and harden our heart, so that we
fear thee not?
Return for the sake of thy servants,
the tribes of thy heritage.

- ¹⁸ Thy holy people possessed thy
sanctuary a little while;
our adversaries have trodden it
down.

- ¹⁹ We have become like those over
whom thou hast never ruled,
like those who are not called by
thy name.

64 O that thou wouldst rend
the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake
at thy presence—

- ^{2y} as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make thy name known to thy
adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble
at thy presence!

- ³ When thou didst terrible things
which we looked not for,
thou camest down, the mountains
quaked at thy presence.

- ⁴ From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides thee,
who works for those who wait for
him.

- ⁵ Thou meetest him that joyfully
works righteousness,

^x Another reading is *he did not afflict*
^y Ch 64.1 in Heb

15–16: The prophet therefore hopefully petitions God, whose immortality is contrasted with the mortality of Israel's patriarchs (*Abraham, Israel* [Jacob]). **17–19:** Israel's sinfulness begets sinfulness. The prophet begs God to deliver his forsaken people from their sins and to restore their ruined sanctuary. **64.1–5b:** A prayer that God should reveal himself in power as in days of old (Ex.19.16–18; Jg.5.4–5; Hab.3.3–15). Man cannot approach God (Gen.11.1–9; Ex. 33.17–23), but God comes to man (Ex.19–20). **5c–7:** The prophet, in behalf of his people, con-

those that remember thee in thy ways.
 Behold, thou wast angry, and we sinned;
 in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?^z
⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean,
 and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
 We all fade like a leaf,
 and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷ There is no one that calls upon thy name,
 that bestirs himself to take hold of thee;
 for thou hast hid thy face from us,
 and hast delivered^a us into the hand of our iniquities.
⁸ Yet, O LORD, thou art our Father;
 we are the clay, and thou art our potter;
 we are all the work of thy hand.
⁹ Be not exceedingly angry, O LORD,
 and remember not iniquity for ever.
 Behold, consider, we are all thy people.
¹⁰ Thy holy cities have become a wilderness,
 Zion has become a wilderness,
 Jerusalem a desolation.
¹¹ Our holy and beautiful house,
 where our fathers praised thee,
 has been burned by fire,
 and all our pleasant places have become ruins.
¹² Wilt thou restrain thyself at these things, O LORD?
 Wilt thou keep silent, and afflict us sorely?

65 I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;
 I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.
 I said, "Here am I, here am I,"
 to a nation that did not call on my name.
² I spread out my hands all the day
 to a rebellious people,
 who walk in a way that is not good,
 following their own devices;
³ a people who provoke me
 to my face continually,
 sacrificing in gardens
 and burning incense upon bricks;
⁴ who sit in tombs,
 and spend the night in secret places;
 who eat swine's flesh,
 and broth of abominable things
 is in their vessels;
⁵ who say, "Keep to yourself,
 do not come near me, for I am set apart from you."
 These are a smoke in my nostrils,
 a fire that burns all the day.
⁶ Behold, it is written before me:
 "I will not keep silent, but I will repay,
 yea, I will repay into their bosom
⁷ their^b iniquities and their^b
 fathers' iniquities together,
 says the LORD;
 because they burned incense upon
 the mountains
 and reviled me upon the hills,
 I will measure into their bosom
 payment for their former doings."

⁸ Thus says the LORD:

^z Hebrew obscure

^a Gk Syr Old Latin Tg: Heb *melted*

^b Gk Syr: Heb *your*

fesses their sin and hopelessness. **8-12:** In his final petition he pleads that the LORD relent his anger and have compassion on desolate Jerusalem and the destroyed temple. **10:** *Thy holy cities*, the cities are the LORD's, for the Promised Land is his. **12:** *Wilt thou keep silent . . . ?* compare Ps.79.5; 85.5-7.

65.1-25: God's answer. 1-2: Not God, but the people were silent. *Spread out my hands*, in a gesture of invitation (Rom.10.20-21). **3:** *Sacrificing in gardens*, an allusion to nature-cult practices. *Burning incense* was peculiarly associated with pagan worship, although also a part of Israelite worship (Jer.1.16). **4:** *Sit in tombs*, for divination, to consult the dead (29.4). *Spend the night in secret places*, in a shrine to receive visions (compare 1 Kg.3.4-15). To eat swine's flesh was forbidden (Dt.14.8). **5:** *I am set apart*, sanctified by some idolatrous rite. **6-7:** God has

- "As the wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, 'Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,'
so I will do for my servants' sake,
and not destroy them all.
- ⁹ I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;
my chosen shall inherit it,
and my servants shall dwell there.
- ¹⁰ Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,
for my people who have sought me.
- ¹¹ But you who forsake the LORD,
who forget my holy mountain,
who set a table for Fortune
and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny;
- ¹² I will destine you to the sword,
and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter;
because, when I called, you did not answer,
when I spoke, you did not listen,
but you did what was evil in my eyes,
and chose what I did not delight in."
- ¹³ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
"Behold, my servants shall eat,
but you shall be hungry;
behold, my servants shall drink,
but you shall be thirsty;
behold, my servants shall rejoice,
but you shall be put to shame;
- ¹⁴ behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart,
but you shall cry out for pain of heart,
and shall wail for anguish of spirit.
- ¹⁵ You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse,
and the Lord GOD will slay you;
but his servants he will call by a different name.
- ¹⁶ So that he who blesses himself in the land
shall bless himself by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the land
shall swear by the God of truth;
because the former troubles are forgotten
and are hid from my eyes.
- ¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth;
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.
- ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice for ever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,
and her people a joy.
- ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.
- ²⁰ No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the child shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.
- ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
- ²² They shall not build and another inhabit;

noted their faithlessness (4.3). **8-10:** As good clusters of grapes are separated from the bad, so God will separate the righteous from the unrighteous (Mt.25.32-33). The LORD's *chosen*, his *servants* (44.1), Israel, will inherit the land (57.13). *Sharon*, the northern coastal plain. *Achor*, the desolate region west of the Dead Sea (Jos.7.24; see Hos.2.15 n.). **11-12:** In the Hebrew text *Fortune* and *Destiny* are Gad and Meni, Syrian gods of fate. **15-16:** Apostates' name, *a curse*; the righteous, a new name (62.2,4). **17-19:** Heaven and earth will be transformed; God will rejoice with Jerusalem (62.5; contrast 64.10); her mourning is over (25.8; 2 Pet.3.13; Rev.21.4). **21-23:** Man will live in happiness and security. *Tree*, Jer.17.8. *Calamity*, sudden

- they shall not plant and another eat;
 for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
 and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
- ²³ They shall not labor in vain,
 or bear children for calamity;^c
 for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,
 and their children with them.
- ²⁴ Before they call I will answer,
 while they are yet speaking I will hear.
- ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
 the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
 and dust shall be the serpent's food.
- They shall not hurt or destroy
 in all my holy mountain,
 says the LORD."

66 Thus says the LORD:
 "Heaven is my throne
 and the earth is my footstool;
 what is the house which you would build for me,
 and what is the place of my rest?"

² All these things my hand has made,
 and so all these things are mine;^d
 says the LORD.

But this is the man to whom I will look,
 he that is humble and contrite in spirit,
 and trembles at my word.

- ³ "He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man;
 he who sacrifices a lamb, like him

who breaks a dog's neck;
 he who presents a cereal offering,
 like him who offers swine's blood;
 he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like him who blesses an idol.

These have chosen their own ways,
 and their soul delights in their abominations;

⁴ I also will choose affliction for them,
 and bring their fears upon them;
 because, when I called, no one answered,
 when I spoke they did not listen;
 but they did what was evil in my eyes,
 and chose that in which I did not delight."

- ⁵ Hear the word of the LORD,
 you who tremble at his word:
 "Your brethren who hate you
 and cast you out for my name's sake
 have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified,
 that we may see your joy';
 but it is they who shall be put to shame.

- ⁶ "Hark, an uproar from the city!
 A voice from the temple!
 The voice of the LORD,
 rendering recompense to his enemies!"

- ⁷ "Before she was in labor
 she gave birth;
 before her pain came upon her
 she was delivered of a son.

^c Or sudden terror ^d Gk Syr: Heb came to be

misfortune (Jer.15.8). **24-25**: In the new Jerusalem restored, all will be at peace (11.6-9). *My holy mountain*, see 11.9 n.; compare 27.13; 56.7; J1.3.17.

66.1-24: **Concluding oracles. 1-6**: On temple worship. **1-2**: A house made of created materials cannot contain the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth (compare 1 Kg.8.27), nor do mere acts suffice for devout humility (1.10-20). **3-4**: These verses are perhaps best taken as the continuation of the thought in vv. 1-2. The insertion of the word "like" (not in the Hebrew) interprets one possible meaning of these verses. In accord with another interpretation read: "He who slaughters an ox, he who kills a man . . . ; these have chosen their own ways . . ." The first part of each line describes normally acceptable practice, the second what is not. The "Canaanitish" practices of sacrificing humans (*kills a man*), dogs (*breaks a dog's neck*), and swine (*offers swine's blood*) are abominations. **5-6**: Vindication for true believers. God has returned to his temple (Ezek.43.1-5). **7-16**: On Jerusalem's restoration. **7-9**: Jerusalem's rebirth is a

- ⁸ Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall a land be born in one day?
Shall a nation be brought forth in
one moment?
For as soon as Zion was in labor
she brought forth her sons.
- ⁹ Shall I bring to the birth and not
cause to bring forth?
says the LORD;
shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut
the womb?
says your God.
- ¹⁰ "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be
glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her;
- ¹¹ that you may suck and be satisfied
with her consoling breasts;
that you may drink deeply with
delight
from the abundance of her glory."
- ¹² For thus says the LORD:
"Behold, I will extend prosperity to
her like a river,
and the wealth of the nations like
an overflowing stream;
and you shall suck, you shall be
carried upon her hip,
and dandled upon her knees.
- ¹³ As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in
Jerusalem.
- ¹⁴ You shall see, and your heart shall
rejoice;
your bones shall flourish like the
grass;
and it shall be known that the hand
of the LORD is with his
servants,
- and his indignation is against his
enemies.
- ¹⁵ "For behold, the LORD will come in
fire,
and his chariots like the
stormwind,
to render his anger in fury,
and his rebuke with flames of fire.
- ¹⁶ For by fire will the LORD execute
judgment,
and by his sword, upon all flesh;
and those slain by the LORD shall
be many.
- ¹⁷ "Those who sanctify and purify
themselves to go into the gardens, fol-
lowing one in the midst, eating swine's
flesh and the abomination and mice,
shall come to an end together, says the
LORD.
- ¹⁸ "For I know^e their works and
their thoughts, and I am^f coming to
gather all nations and tongues; and they
shall come and shall see my glory,
¹⁹ and I will set a sign among them.
And from them I will send survivors to
the nations, to Tarshish, Put,^g and Lud,
who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan,
to the coastlands afar off, that have
not heard my fame or seen my glory;
and they shall declare my glory among
the nations. ²⁰ And they shall bring
all your brethren from all the nations
as an offering to the LORD, upon
horses, and in chariots, and in litters,
and upon mules, and upon drome-
daries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem,
says the LORD, just as the Israelites
bring their cereal offering in a clean ves-
sel to the house of the LORD. ²¹ And

^e Gk Syr: Heb lacks *know*^f Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *it is*^g Gk: Heb *Pul*

divinely wrought miracle. **10-11:** Restored "Mother" Jerusalem can provide abundantly for all (49.17-21). **12-14:** Continuation of the vision of Jerusalem's prosperity and comfort. **15-16:** With *fire* (29.6; 64.11) and *sword* (31.8; Ezek. ch. 21), God will destroy his enemies. **17:** Compare vv. 3-4. *In the midst*, perhaps in a pagan procession. **18-24:** The return of Israel and the fate of the wicked. **18-21:** God will reveal his glory to the nations. They with Israel will assemble in Jerusalem, some Gentiles even becoming priests. **22-23:** A magnificent climax: God's people, like the new creation, will endure forever (Jer.31.34-36) and a mighty chorus of praises will ceaselessly rise to God's throne. **24:** Final reminder of the eternal punishment of the wicked.

some of them also I will take for priests
and for Levites, says the LORD.

²² "For as the new heavens and the new
earth

which I will make
shall remain before me, says the
LORD;

so shall your descendants and
your name remain.

²³ From new moon to new moon,

and from sabbath to sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before
me,
says the LORD.

24 "And they shall go forth and look
on the dead bodies of the men that
have rebelled against me; for their
worm shall not die, their fire shall not
be quenched, and they shall be an
abhorrence to all flesh."

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was a descendant of the priest Abiathar, who was banished by Solomon to Anathoth (1 Kg.2.26,27; compare 1 Sam.3.10-14). His ministry began in 627 B.C. and ended sometime after 580, probably in Egypt.

The book bearing his name consists essentially of a collection of oracles against Judah and Jerusalem which he dictated to his aide Baruch (1.4-6.30, from the time of Josiah; 7.1-20.18, from the time of Jehoiakim; 21.1-25.14, from the time of Zedekiah), Baruch's memoirs (chs. 26-35; 36-45), and a group of oracles against foreign nations (25.15-38; chs. 46-51), together with an introduction (1.1-3) and an historical appendix (ch. 52). Some other materials were added when the book was edited sometime after 560 B.C. In general a chronological order is followed in the two main sections of the book (1.4-25.14; chs. 26-45), but because of the editing, some materials are now misplaced.

The present Hebrew text differs from the Greek version (the Septuagint) in both content and order. The Septuagint omits several passages (e.g. 33.14-26) and combines the oracles against the foreign nations into a single section following 25.14, though in a different order.

Jeremiah is much concerned with rewards and punishment, the recompense for good and evil, faithfulness and disobedience (see ch. 35). He criticized Judah for its worship of gods other than the LORD, with all the attendant evils in cult and daily life. God's covenant people must return to him. The judgment must come, but the ominous future (later, the unhappy present) would be replaced by a new and more enduring relationship with God.

THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH, THE SON of Hilki'ah, of the priests who were in An'athoth in the land of Benjamin,² to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josi'ah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.³ It came also in the days of Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedeki'ah, the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

4 Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶ Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Be-

hold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." ⁷ But the LORD said to me,

"Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak.

⁸ Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD."

⁹ Then the LORD put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me,

"Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

1.1-3 Superscription. 1: *Words*, i.e. "history." The name *Jeremiah* means "The LORD [Yahweh] exalts." *Priests . . . in Anathoth*, see Introduction. Anathoth is located at modern Ras Kharrubeh about two miles northeast of Jerusalem. 2: *Thirteenth year of Josiah*, 627 B.C. 3: *Eleventh year of Zedekiah*, 587 B.C.

1.4-19: Jeremiah's call and related visions. 4: *Word of the LORD*, characteristic expression in Jeremiah, perhaps emphasizing that his message is God's word. 5: *Knew*, in the Biblical sense, a profound and intimate knowledge. *To the nations*, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Judah. 6-8: God's support will supplement Jeremiah's inexperience (*youth*). 9: Compare 15.19; Mt.10.19-20. 10: God's word is a dynamic and vital force, not a static and symbolic figure (Is.55.10-11).

11 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a rod of almond."^a 12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching^b over my word to perform it."

13 The word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north."

14 Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For, lo, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, says the LORD; and they shall come and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls round about, and against all the cities of Judah. 16 And I will utter my judgments against them, for all their wickedness in forsaking me; they have burned incense to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands."

17 But you, gird up your loins; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them."

18 And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land."

19 They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the LORD, to deliver you."

2 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD,

I remember the devotion of your youth,

your love as a bride,
how you followed me in the wilderness,
in a land not sown.

3 Israel was holy to the LORD,
the first fruits of his harvest.
All who ate of it became guilty;
evil came upon them,
says the LORD."

4 Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. 5 Thus says the LORD:

"What wrong did your fathers find in me
that they went far from me,
and went after worthlessness, and
became worthless?"

6 They did not say, 'Where is the LORD
who brought us up from the land
of Egypt,
who led us in the wilderness,
in a land of deserts and pits,
in a land of drought and deep
darkness,
in a land that none passes through,
where no man dwells?'

7 And I brought you into a plentiful
land
to enjoy its fruits and its good
things.

But when you came in you defiled
my land,
and made my heritage an
abomination.

8 The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?'

Those who handle the law did not
know me;
the rulers^c transgressed against me;

^a Heb *shaqed* ^b Heb *shoqed* ^c Heb *shepherds*

11-12: Play on words (see notes *a* and *b*) to encourage the hesitant young prophet in the face of certain opposition. 13-14: Facing away from the north, the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain; this translation implies that the pot was spilling its hot contents toward the south, symbolizing the trouble which would come from the north. Another view is that the draft on the fire came from the north. Invaders into Palestine often came from the north. 17-19: An expansion of the thought in vv. 4-8.

2.1-37: The apostasy of Israel. 1-3: God defended his bride (comparing the Sinai covenant with the marriage vow, see Hos.2.16) against all attempts to violate her (Amalekites, Canaanites, Philistines, etc.). 4-9: God remained unwaveringly faithful, despite Israel's rebellion. 8: Priests and law suggest a time during Josiah's reform. After Josiah's death, Jeremiah attacked

the prophets prophesied by Ba'al,
and went after things that do not
profit.

**9 “Therefore I still contend with you,
 says the LORD,
and with your children’s children
I will contend.**

¹⁰ For cross to the coasts of Cyprus
and see,
or send to Kedar and examine with
care;
see if there has been such a thing.

11 Has a nation changed its gods,
even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their
glory
for that which does not profit.

¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
be shocked, be utterly desolate,
says the LORD.

13 for my people have committed two
evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for
themselves,
broken cisterns,
that can hold no water.

14 “Is Israel a slave? Is he a homeborn servant?

Why then has he become a prey?

15 The lions have roared against him,
they have roared loudly.
They have made his land a waste;
his cities are in ruins, without
inhabitant.

16 Moreover, the men of Memphis and
Tah'panhes
have broken the crown of your
head.

**17 Have you not brought this upon
yourself
by forsaking the LORD your God,
when he led you in the way?**

18 And now what do you gain by going
to Egypt,
to drink the waters of the Nile?
Or what do you gain by going to
Assyria,
to drink the waters of the
Euphra'tes?

**19 Your wickedness will chasten you,
and your apostasy will reprove
you.
Know and see that it is evil and
bitter
for you to forsake the LORD your
God;
the fear of me is not in you,
says the Lord God of hosts.**

²⁰ "For long ago you broke your yoke
and burst your bonds;
and you said, 'I will not serve.'"

**Yea, upon every high hill
and under every green tree
you bowed down as a harlot.**

**21 Yet I planted you a choice vine,
wholly of pure seed.**

How then have you turned
degenerate
and become a wild vine?

**22 Though you wash yourself with lye
and use much soap,
the stain of your guilt is still
before me.**

says the Lord God,

23 How can you say, 'I am not defiled,
I have not gone after the
Ba'als'?

**Look at your way in the valley;
know what you have done—**

the prophets primarily (ch. 23). **10-13:** The LORD calls (upon the heavenly assembly [?]; compare Is.1.2; Mic.6.1) to witness the folly unprecedented (8.4) in both West (*Cyprus*) and East (*Kedar*) of a people who forsake the *fountain of living waters* (Jn.4.10-15; 7.38) for the stagnant water at the bottom of a leaky *cistern*. **14-19:** Israel has forsaken her covenant birthright of responsible freedom to become a slave of Assyria (*the lions*) and Egypt (*Memphis*, the capital of northern Egypt, fourteen miles south of Cairo) bringing disgrace (with v. 16b compare Is.3.17; 7.20) upon themselves. **16,18:** Compare v. 36. **20-28:** Unfaithful Israel is compared to a stubborn ox, to a wild vine (Is.5.1-7; Hos.10.1) germinating from good seed but now inexplicably and irremediably worthless, to a nymphomaniacal prostitute (Hos.4.13) who restlessly seeks satisfaction from anyone and yet denies her guilt in spite of evidence (such as human sacrifice *in the valley*), and to a thief who is remorseful only when confronted by evidence of his

- a restive young camel interlacing her tracks,
²⁴ a wild ass used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind!
 Who can restrain her lust?
 None who seek her need weary themselves;
 in her month they will find her.
²⁵ Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst.
 But you said, 'It is hopeless, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go.'
²⁶ "As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed:
 they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets,
²⁷ who say to a tree, 'You are my father,'
 and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.'
 For they have turned their back to me,
 and not their face.
 But in the time of their trouble they say,
 'Arise and save us!'
²⁸ But where are your gods that you made for yourself?
 Let them arise, if they can save you, in your time of trouble;
 for as many as your cities are your gods, O Judah.
²⁹ "Why do you complain against me?
 You have all rebelled against me, says the LORD.
³⁰ In vain have I smitten your children, they took no correction;
 your own sword devoured your prophets
 like a ravening lion.
³¹ And you, O generation, heed the word of the LORD.

- Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of thick darkness?
 Why then do my people say, 'We are free,
 we will come no more to thee?'
³² Can a maiden forget her ornaments,
 or a bride her attire?
 Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.
³³ "How well you direct your course to seek lovers!
 So that even to wicked women you have taught your ways.
³⁴ Also on your skirts is found the lifeblood of guiltless poor;
 you did not find them breaking in.
 Yet in spite of all these things
³⁵ you say, 'I am innocent;
 surely his anger has turned from me.'
 Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, 'I have not sinned.'
³⁶ How lightly you gad about, changing your way!
 You shall be put to shame by Egypt as you were put to shame by Assyria.
³⁷ From it too you will come away with your hands upon your head, for the LORD has rejected those in whom you trust,
 and you will not prosper by them.
- 3 "If^d a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her?
 Would not that land be greatly polluted?
 You have played the harlot with many lovers;
 and would you return to me?
 says the LORD.

d Gk Syr: Heb Saying, If

wrong-doing (such as the *tree* or Asherah and the *stone* or sacred pillar, both cult furnishings). Let their gods now rescue Israel in her time of need! **29-31:** Israel rejected God's correction and leadership, even killing his prophets (1 Kg.19.10; 2 Kg.21.16). **32:** See vv. 2-3. **33-37:** Undeniable evidence accuses her. In shame and sorrow (*hands upon your head*), abandoned by her lovers (*Egypt and Assyria*), faithless Israel will stand alone and condemned before God.

3.1-4.4: Exhortations to repent. **3.1-5:** Judah's sin surpasses anything envisioned by the law (Dt.24.1-4). Though there is a drought in the land (14.1-6) she does not abandon her indiscriminate harlotry (2.20); she can expect no re-acceptance (contrast vv. 6-13). **1:** *Land*, the

- ² Lift up your eyes to the bare heights,
and see!
Where have you not been lain
with?
By the waysides you have sat
awaiting lovers
like an Arab in the wilderness.
You have polluted the land
with your vile harlotry.
- ³ Therefore the showers have been
withheld,
and the spring rain has not come;
yet you have a harlot's brow,
you refuse to be ashamed.
- ⁴ Have you not just now called to me,
'My father, thou art the friend of
my youth—
- ⁵ will he be angry for ever,
will he be indignant to the end?'
Behold, you have spoken,
but you have done all the evil
that you could."

6 The LORD said to me in the days of King Josi'ah: "Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the harlot? ⁷ And I thought, 'After she has done all this she will return to me'; but she did not return, and her false sister Judah saw it. ⁸ She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the harlot. ⁹ Because harlotry was so light to her, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. ¹⁰ Yet for all this her false sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, says the LORD."

11 And the LORD said to me,
"Faithless Israel has shown herself less

guilty than false Judah. ¹² Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say,

'Return, faithless Israel,
says the LORD.

I will not look on you in anger,
for I am merciful,
says the LORD;

I will not be angry for ever.
¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt,
that you rebelled against the LORD
your God

and scattered your favors among
strangers under every green
tree,
and that you have not obeyed my
voice,

says the LORD.

¹⁴ Return, O faithless children,
says the LORD;
for I am your master;
I will take you, one from a city and
two from a family,
and I will bring you to Zion.

15 "And I will give you shepherds
after my own heart, who will feed you
with knowledge and understanding.

¹⁶ And when you have multiplied and
increased in the land, in those days,
says the LORD, they shall no more say,
"The ark of the covenant of the LORD."

It shall not come to mind, or be re-
membered, or missed; it shall not be
made again. ¹⁷ At that time Jerusalem
shall be called the throne of the LORD,
and all nations shall gather to it, to the
presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and
they shall no more stubbornly follow
their own evil heart. ¹⁸ In those days
the house of Judah shall join the house
of Israel, and together they shall come
from the land of the north to the land
that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

¹⁹ "I thought
how I would set you among my
sons,

Septuagint reads "woman." 6-14: The return of Israel. This oracle, although by Jeremiah (some scholars disagree), is intrusive here. Compare chs. 30-31; Ezek. chs. 16; 23. Because of her unheeding unfaithfulness (Hos.2.20) God sent Israel into exile (with a *decree of divorce*, Dt. 24.1-4), but Judah's guilt is worse; she failed to learn from Israel's experience. Somewhat inconsistent with vv. 1-5, Israel is invited to repent and return. 15-18: Return from exile and reunion of Israel and Judah under faithful rulers. This oracle is probably later than the rest of the section. 15: *Shepherds*, rulers. 16-17: Jerusalem will replace the *ark* as the symbol of

and give you a pleasant land,
a heritage most beautiful of all
nations.
And I thought you would call me,
My Father,
and would not turn from
following me.
²⁰ Surely, as a faithless wife leaves her
husband,
so have you been faithless to me,
O house of Israel,
says the LORD.' "

²¹ A voice on the bare heights is heard,
the weeping and pleading of
Israel's sons,
because they have perverted their
way,
they have forgotten the LORD
their God.

²² "Return, O faithless sons,
I will heal your faithlessness."
"Behold, we come to thee;
for thou art the LORD our God.

²³ Truly the hills are a delusion,
the orgies on the mountains.
Truly in the LORD our God
is the salvation of Israel.

²⁴ "But from our youth the shameful
thing has devoured all for which
our fathers labored, their flocks and
their herds, their sons and their daughters.
²⁵ Let us lie down in our shame,
and let our dishonor cover us; for we
have sinned against the LORD our
God, we and our fathers, from our
youth even to this day; and we have
not obeyed the voice of the LORD our
God."

⁴ "If you return, O Israel,
says the LORD,
to me you should return.

If you remove your abominations
from my presence,
and do not waver,
² and if you swear, 'As the LORD lives,'
in truth, in justice, and in
uprightness,
then nations shall bless themselves
in him,
and in him shall they glory."

³ For thus says the LORD to the men
of Judah and to the inhabitants of
Jerusalem:

"Break up your fallow ground,
and sow not among thorns.

⁴ Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
remove the foreskin of your
hearts,
O men of Judah and inhabitants
of Jerusalem;
lest my wrath go forth like fire,
and burn with none to quench it,
because of the evil of your
doings."

⁵ Declare in Judah, and proclaim in
Jerusalem, and say,
"Blow the trumpet through the land;
cry aloud and say,
'Assemble, and let us go
into the fortified cities!'

⁶ Raise a standard toward Zion,
flee for safety, stay not,
for I bring evil from the north,
and great destruction.

⁷ A lion has gone up from his thicket,
a destroyer of nations has set out;
he has gone forth from his place
to make your land a waste;
your cities will be ruins
without inhabitant.

⁸ For this gird you with sackcloth,
lament and wail;
for the fierce anger of the LORD

the throne of God (14.21; 17.12). 19-20: These verses continue vv. 1-5. Contrary to custom (Num.27.1-8) God would have made "his daughter" Judah his heir, but her faithlessness renders this impossible. 3.21-4.4: From the heights, sites of futile idolatry, come cries of profound repentance (vv. 12-14) and resolve to return to God (Hos.14.2-3). The conditions of repentance are removal of pagan shrines, recognition of God's exclusive claim by swearing in his name only (4.2b), and cleansing of hearts. 3-4: Compare 9.26; Hos.10.12; Rom.2.25-29.

4.5-31: The foe from the north, a recurring theme of Jeremiah (1.13-14; 5.15-17; 6.1-5; etc.). 5-12: Sound the alarm! Muster for the defense (6.1-8)! Like a beast of prey, the foe approaches (5.6)! Courage will fail the leaders of the people who have ignored all warnings of impending doom (6.13-15; 14.13-16; 23.16-17). God's judgment will sweep over the land like the hot

has not turned back from us."

⁹ "In that day, says the LORD, courage shall fail both king and princes; the priests shall be appalled and the prophets astounded." ¹⁰ Then I said, "Ah, Lord God, surely thou hast utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'It shall be well with you'; whereas the sword has reached their very life."

11 At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A hot wind from the bare heights in the desert toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow or cleanse, ¹² a wind too full for this comes for me. Now it is I who speak in judgment upon them."

¹³ Behold, he comes up like clouds, his chariots like the whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles— woe to us, for we are ruined!

¹⁴ O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved.

How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?

¹⁵ For a voice declares from Dan and proclaims evil from Mount Ephraim.

¹⁶ Warn the nations that he is coming; announce to Jerusalem, "Besiegers come from a distant land; they shout against the cities of Judah.

¹⁷ Like keepers of a field are they against her round about, because she has rebelled against me,

says the LORD.

¹⁸ Your ways and your doings have brought this upon you. This is your doom, and it is bitter; it has reached your very heart."

¹⁹ My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain!

Oh, the walls of my heart!

My heart is beating wildly;

I cannot keep silent;

for I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

²⁰ Disaster follows hard on disaster, the whole land is laid waste.

Suddenly my tents are destroyed, my curtains in a moment.

²¹ How long must I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

²² "For my people are foolish, they know me not; they are stupid children, they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil, but how to do good they know not."

²³ I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.

²⁴ I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro.

²⁵ I looked, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled.

²⁶ I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger.

²⁷ For thus says the LORD, "The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end.

²⁸ For this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above be black; for I have spoken, I have purposed; I have not relented nor will I turn back."

desert wind (the sirocco), desiccating everything before it (18.17). **13-18:** Swiftly, like the eagle and the stormwind, the chariotry and cavalry of the enemy approach. Communiqués trace this advance from *Dan* (8.16), through *Mount Ephraim* (central Palestine), *Benjamin* (6.1) into Judah's heartland. **19-22:** Though the people are foolish and stupid (5.2-3), the prophet laments the sudden disaster which has destroyed his beloved land like the striking of a tent (10.19-21). **23-28:** In a vision, the prophet sees the terrifying results of God's irrevocable judgment (7.16; 15.1-4). As if struck by a mighty nuclear bomb, the earth has been returned to its primeval state: waste and void (Gen.1.2). **29-31:** Like a rejected prostitute (3.2-3), like a woman

²⁹ At the noise of horseman and archer
every city takes to flight;
they enter thickets; they climb among
rocks;

all the cities are forsaken,
and no man dwells in them.

³⁰ And you, O desolate one,
what do you mean that you dress in
scarlet,
that you deck yourself with
ornaments of gold,
that you enlarge your eyes with
paint?

In vain you beautify yourself.
Your lovers despise you;
they seek your life.

³¹ For I heard a cry as of a woman in
travail,
anguish as of one bringing forth
her first child,
the cry of the daughter of Zion
gasping for breath,
stretching out her hands,
"Woe is me! I am fainting before
murderers."

5 Run to and fro through the
streets of Jerusalem,
look and take note!

Search her squares to see
if you can find a man,
one who does justice
and seeks truth;
that I may pardon her.

² Though they say, "As the LORD
lives,"
yet they swear falsely.

³ O LORD, do not thy eyes look for
truth?

Thou hast smitten them,
but they felt no anguish;
thou hast consumed them,
but they refused to take
correction.

They have made their faces harder
than rock;
they have refused to repent.

⁴ Then I said, "These are only the
poor,
they have no sense;
for they do not know the way of the
LORD,
the law of their God.

⁵ I will go to the great,
and will speak to them;
for they know the way of the LORD,
the law of their God."
But they all alike had broken the
yoke,
they had burst the bonds.

⁶ Therefore a lion from the forest
shall slay them,
a wolf from the desert shall
destroy them.
A leopard is watching against their
cities,
every one who goes out of them
shall be torn in pieces;
because their transgressions are
many,
their apostasies are great.

⁷ "How can I pardon you?
Your children have forsaken me,
and have sworn by those who are
no gods.

When I fed them to the full,
they committed adultery
and trooped to the houses of
harlots.

⁸ They were well-fed lusty stallions,
each neighing for his neighbor's
wife.

⁹ Shall I not punish them for these
things?

says the LORD;
and shall I not avenge myself

in the anguish of childbirth, like a victim helpless before her murderer, Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion, stretches out her hands in futile appeal and suffers her death throes—alone.

5.1-6.30: The corruptions for which judgment is coming. 1-6: Jeremiah is commanded to search carefully for a faithful man (6.9-10). If one could be found, the LORD would pardon (Gen.18.23-33). He seeks among the "little people" (*poor*), but finds none—perhaps they know no better. He seeks among the privileged *great*, but there is none there either (compare Mt.19.23-25). Therefore beasts of prey will be unleashed against this wayward people (2.15; 4.7; Hab.1.8). 7-11: God has no alternative in the face of rampant idolatry (2.11) and immorality (v. 29; 9.9).

on a nation such as this?

- ¹⁰ "Go up through her vine-rows and destroy,
but make not a full end;
strip away her branches,
for they are not the LORD's.
- ¹¹ For the house of Israel and the house of Judah
have been utterly faithless to me,
says the LORD.
- ¹² They have spoken falsely of the LORD,
and have said, 'He will do nothing;
no evil will come upon us,
nor shall we see sword or famine.
- ¹³ The prophets will become wind;
the word is not in them.
Thus shall it be done to them!'"
- ¹⁴ Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts:
"Because they^e have spoken this word,
behold, I am making my words in your mouth a fire,
and this people wood, and the fire shall devour them.
- ¹⁵ Behold, I am bringing upon you a nation from afar, O house of Israel,
says the LORD.
It is an enduring nation,
it is an ancient nation,
a nation whose language you do not know,
nor can you understand what they say.
- ¹⁶ Their quiver is like an open tomb,
they are all mighty men.
- ¹⁷ They shall eat up your harvest and your food;

they shall eat up your sons and your daughters;
they shall eat up your flocks and your herds;
they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees;
your fortified cities in which you trust they shall destroy with the sword."

¹⁸ "But even in those days, says the LORD, I will not make a full end of you. ¹⁹ And when your people say, 'Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us?' you shall say to them, 'As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve strangers in a land that is not yours.'"

- ²⁰ Declare this in the house of Jacob, proclaim it in Judah:
- ²¹ "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people,
who have eyes, but see not,
who have ears, but hear not.
- ²² Do you not fear me? says the LORD;
Do you not tremble before me?
I placed the sand as the bound for the sea,
a perpetual barrier which it cannot pass;
though the waves toss, they cannot prevail,
though they roar, they cannot pass over it.
- ²³ But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart;
they have turned aside and gone away.
- ²⁴ They do not say in their hearts,
'Let us fear the LORD our God,
who gives the rain in its season,

^e Heb you

The LORD's choice vineyard has grown wild and must be destroyed (2.20-21; Is.5.1-7). 12-17: The judgment. The prophetic words which the people had ignored as *wind* will be revealed as the consuming *word* of God. God is not powerless (Pss.10.4; 14.1) but will bring upon them the ravages of a vicious invader. 18-19: A recurring comment (9.12-14; 16.10-13; 22.8-9), modifying Jeremiah's customary warnings of total destruction (vv. 16-17; 13.13-14). 20-25: Judah's foolish stubbornness has closed her eyes and ears to the manifest acts of God (Pr.1.7; Is.6.9-10; Mt.13.10-15). 22: Perhaps a reflection of the ancient myth of a deity's conquest of the mighty monster, the primordial sea (Job.38.8-11; Ps.104.6-9; compare Is.51.9-10). 24b: The seven weeks from Passover to Pentecost (Dt.16.9-10) when rain could ruin the harvest

the autumn rain and the spring
rain,
and keeps for us
the weeks appointed for the
harvest.'

**25 Your iniquities have turned these
away,
and your sins have kept good from
you.**

²⁶ For wicked men are found among
my people;
they lurk like fowlers lying in
wait.^f

**They set a trap;
they catch men.**

27 Like a basket full of birds,
their houses are full of treachery;
therefore they have become great
and rich.

28 they have grown fat and sleek.
They know no bounds in deeds of
wickedness;
they judge not with justice
the cause of the fatherless, to make
it prosper,
and they do not defend the rights
of the needy.

29 Shall I not punish them for these things?

says the LORD,
and shall I not avenge myself
on a nation such as this?"

³⁰ An appalling and horrible thing
has happened in the land:

31 the prophets prophesy falsely,
and the priests rule at their
direction;
my people love to have it so,
but what will you do when the end
comes?

6 Flee for safety, O people of Benjamin,
from the midst of Jerusalem!
Blow the trumpet in Teko'a,

and raise a signal on
Beth-hacche'rem;
for evil looms out of the north,
and great destruction.

² The comely and delicately bred I will
destroy,
the daughter of Zion.

3 Shepherds with their flocks shall
come against her;
they shall pitch their tents around
her,
they shall pasture, each in his
place.

4 "Prepare war against her;
up, and let us attack at noon!"
"Woe to us, for the day declines,
for the shadows of evening
lengthen!"

5. "Up, and let us attack by night, and destroy her palaces!"

⁶ For thus says the LORD of hosts:
"Hew down her trees;
cast up a siege mound against
Jerusalem.

This is the city which must be
punished;
there is nothing but oppression
within her.

**7 As a well keeps its water fresh,
so she keeps fresh her
wickedness;
violence and destruction are heard
within her;
sickness and wounds are ever
before me.**

⁸ Be warned, O Jerusalem,
lest I be alienated from you;
lest I make you a desolation,
an uninhabited land."

⁹ Thus says the LORD of hosts:
“Glean^g thoroughly as a vine
the remnant of Israel;

f Heb uncertain
g Cn: Heb *they shall glean*

(1 Sam.12.16–18). **26–31:** Judah must be punished (v. 9) for her tolerance of those who grow wealthy by defrauding the defenseless (Dt.24.17–18; Am.2.6–7) like fowlers catching hapless birds in nets and putting them in baskets, and especially for her hearty approval of the perversity of priest and prophet (6.13–15; 23.9–22; Mic.3.5–8). **6.1–8:** The foe approaches from the north. **1:** *Tekoa*, twelve miles south of Jerusalem; *Beth-hachcherem*, modern Ramet Rahel, two miles south of Jerusalem. **3:** *Shepherds with their flocks*, kings with their armies (compare 1.15; 12.10). **4:** *Prepare*, more literally, “sanctify” (see Jl.3.9 note f). **9–15:** Jerusalem’s obduracy.

- like a grape-gatherer pass your hand
again
over its branches."
- ¹⁰ To whom shall I speak and give
warning,
that they may hear?
Behold, their ears are closed,^h
they cannot listen;
behold, the word of the LORD is
to them an object of scorn,
they take no pleasure in it.
- ¹¹ Therefore I am full of the wrath
of the LORD;
I am weary of holding it in.
"Pour it out upon the children in the
street,
and upon the gatherings of young
men, also;
both husband and wife shall be taken,
the old folk and the very aged.
- ¹² Their houses shall be turned over
to others,
their fields and wives together;
for I will stretch out my hand
against the inhabitants of the
land,"
- says the LORD.
- ¹³ "For from the least to the greatest
of them,
every one is greedy for unjust
gain;
and from prophet to priest,
every one deals falsely.
- ¹⁴ They have healed the wound of my
people lightly,
saying, 'Peace, peace,'
when there is no peace.
- ¹⁵ Were they ashamed when they
committed abomination?
No, they were not at all ashamed;
they did not know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among
those who fall;
at the time that I punish them,
they shall be overthrown,"
- says the LORD.
- ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD:
"Stand by the roads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way is; and walk
in it,
and find rest for your souls.
But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'
- ¹⁷ I set watchmen over you, saying,
'Give heed to the sound of the
trumpet!'
But they said, 'We will not give heed.'
- ¹⁸ Therefore hear, O nations,
and know, O congregation, what
will happen to them.
- ¹⁹ Hear, O earth; behold, I am
bringing evil upon this people,
the fruit of their devices,
because they have not given heed to
my words;
and as for my law, they have
rejected it.
- ²⁰ To what purpose does frankincense
come to me from Sheba,
or sweet cane from a distant land?
Your burnt offerings are not
acceptable,
nor your sacrifices pleasing to me.
- ²¹ Therefore thus says the LORD:
'Behold, I will lay before this people
stumbling blocks against which
they shall stumble;
fathers and sons together,
neighbor and friend shall
perish.'"
- ²² Thus says the LORD:
"Behold, a people is coming from
the north country,
a great nation is stirring from the
farthest parts of the earth.
- ²³ They lay hold on bow and spear,
they are cruel and have no mercy,
the sound of them is like the
roaring sea;
they ride upon horses,

^h Heb *uncircumcised*

Jeremiah is to search meticulously for a God-fearing person (5.1), but he finds none (20.7-18; Mic.7.1-2). God will pour out his wrath (Is.5.25; Ezek.6.14) upon the impenitent people, especially on the leaders who promised material and spiritual well-being (*peace*) when none was to be had (8.10-12; Ezek.13.10-11). **16-21**: Jerusalem is without excuse. God gave his covenant and instruction (*paths, my law*) and sent his prophets (*watchmen, my words*; compare Hos.9.8) but both were ignored. The finest and rarest offerings (*frankincense, sweet cane*) are no substitute for faithfulness (7.21-23; Am.5.21-24). *Sheba*, southwest Arabia. **22-26**: The foe

set in array as a man for battle,
against you, O daughter of Zion!"

²⁴ We have heard the report of it,
our hands fall helpless;
anguish has taken hold of us,
pain as of a woman in travail.

²⁵ Go not forth into the field,
nor walk on the road;
for the enemy has a sword,
terror is on every side.

²⁶ O daughter of my people, gird on
sackcloth,
and roll in ashes;
make mourning as for an only son,
most bitter lamentation;
for suddenly the destroyer
will come upon us.

²⁷ "I have made you an assayer and
tester among my people,
that you may know and assay
their ways.

²⁸ They are all stubbornly rebellious,
going about with slanders;
they are bronze and iron,
all of them act corruptly.

²⁹ The bellows blow fiercely,
the lead is consumed by the fire;
in vain the refining goes on,
for the wicked are not removed.

³⁰ Refuse silver they are called,
for the LORD has rejected them."

7 The word that came to Jeremiah
from the LORD: ² "Stand in the
gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim
there this word, and say, Hear the
word of the LORD, all you men of Judah
who enter these gates to worship the
LORD. ³ Thus says the LORD of hosts,

the God of Israel, Amend your ways
and your doings, and I will let you dwell
in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in these
deceptive words: 'This is the temple
of the LORD, the temple of the LORD,
the temple of the LORD.'

⁵ "For if you truly amend your
ways and your doings, if you truly exe-
cute justice one with another, ⁶ if you
do not oppress the alien, the fatherless
or the widow, or shed innocent blood
in this place, and if you do not go after
other gods to your own hurt, ⁷ then I
will let you dwell in this place, in the
land that I gave of old to your fathers
for ever.

⁸ "Behold, you trust in deceptive
words to no avail. ⁹ Will you steal,
murder, commit adultery, swear falsely,
burn incense to Ba'al, and go after
other gods that you have not known,
¹⁰ and then come and stand before
me in this house, which is called by my
name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—
only to go on doing all these abomi-
nations? ¹¹ Has this house, which is
called by my name, become a den of
robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself
have seen it, says the LORD. ¹² Go
now to my place that was in Shiloh,
where I made my name dwell at first,
and see what I did to it for the wicked-
ness of my people Israel. ¹³ And now,
because you have done all these
things, says the LORD, and when I
spoke to you persistently you did not
listen, and when I called you, you did
not answer, ¹⁴ therefore I will do to
the house which is called by my
name, and in which you trust, and

from the north (4.5–8) remains unidentified (25.1–14). The approach of an invading army has, in all ages, struck terror into the hearts of the people of the invaded land (Am.8.10; Zech.12.10). **25:** *Terror on every side*, a characteristic expression of Jeremiah to describe all-encompassing danger (20.3,10; 46.5; 49.29; Lam.2.22). **27–30:** Jeremiah, the assayer. One function of the prophetic office was to assay the faithfulness (*silver*) of the people. Jeremiah discovers that there is no precious metal to be found.

7.1–15: **The temple sermon** (compare 26.4–6). **4:** The temple's presence was mistakenly interpreted as necessarily assuring God's protection (Is.31.4; for three-fold emphasis, compare 22.29; Is.6.3). Jeremiah disagreed (Mic.3.12); a complete moral change was required (vv. 5–6; compare Hos.4.2; Mic.6.8). As *Shiloh* (eighteen miles north of Jerusalem), the earlier central shrine, was destroyed (around 1050 B.C. in the days of Samuel; compare 1 Sam. chs. 4–6; Ps.78.56–72), so also *this house*, desecrated by idolatry, will be destroyed (v. 11; compare Mt. 21.13). Immediately following this sermon, Jeremiah was arrested (see 26.8).

to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.¹⁵ And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of E'phraim.

16 "As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I do not hear you.¹⁷ Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?¹⁸ The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger.¹⁹ Is it I whom they provoke? says the LORD. Is it not themselves, to their own confusion?²⁰ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched."

21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh.²² For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.²³ But this command I gave them, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'²⁴ But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.²⁵ From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt

to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day;²⁶ yet they did not listen to me, or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

27 "So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you.²⁸ And you shall say to them, 'This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.

²⁹ Cut off your hair and cast it away; raise a lamentation on the bare heights,

for the LORD has rejected and forsaken

the generation of his wrath.'

30 "For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, says the LORD; they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it.³¹ And they have built the high placeⁱ of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.³² Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when it will no more be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of Slaughter: for they will bury in Topheth, because there is no room elsewhere.³³ And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth; and none will frighten them away.³⁴ And I will make to cease

ⁱ GK Tg: Heb *high places*

7.16-8.3: Abuses in worship. 16-20: Because of Judah's general apostasy, God forbids Jeremiah to exercise one of the functions of the prophetic office: intercession (7.16; 11.14; 15.1; compare Am.7.2,5). *Queen of heaven*, see 44.15-28 n. 21-28: Faithfulness, not sacrifice, is required. Sacrifices are acceptable only when the right relationship exists between God and man (6.20; Ps.51.15-19). Until then, man may as well eat the flesh of the *burnt offering*, customarily incinerated (Lev. ch. 1), as well as the other offerings (Lev. ch. 3; 7.11-18). **7.29-8.3:** The fate of Judah. 29: *Cut your hair*, a sign of mourning (16.6; Mic.1.16). 31: The most gruesome of Israel's aberrations was the sacrifice of children (19.5; 32.35) on the burning platform (*Topheth*, 2 Kg.23.10). Strictly forbidden by God (Lev.18.21), it will eventually be recognized as murder. *Valley of the son of Hinnom*, southwest of the city joining the Kidron valley.

from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land shall become a waste.

8 "At that time, says the LORD, the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of its princes, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be brought out of their tombs; ² and they shall be spread before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and served, which they have gone after, and which they have sought and worshiped; and they shall not be gathered or buried; they shall be as dung on the surface of the ground. ³ Death shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them, says the LORD of hosts.

4 "You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD:

When men fall, do they not rise again?

If one turns away, does he not return?

5 Why then has this people turned away in perpetual backsliding?

They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return.

6 I have given heed and listened, but they have not spoken aright;

no man repents of his wickedness, saying, 'What have I done?'

Every one turns to his own course, like a horse plunging headlong into battle.

7 Even the stork in the heavens knows her times;

and the turtledove, swallow, and crane^j

keep the time of their coming; but my people know not the ordinance of the LORD.

8 "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us'?

But, behold, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie.

9 The wise men shall be put to shame, they shall be dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD, and what wisdom is in them?

10 Therefore I will give their wives to others and their fields to conquerors, because from the least to the greatest every one is greedy for unjust gain;

from prophet to priest every one deals falsely.

11 They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.

12 Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among the fallen; when I punish them, they shall be overthrown,

says the LORD.

13 When I would gather them, says the LORD, there are no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree; even the leaves are withered, and what I gave them has passed away from them."^k

^j The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain
^k Heb uncertain

33: Corpses as carrion were a frightful prospect for ancient man. 34: 16.9. 8.1-2: Jeremiah here uses biting irony.

8.4-10.25: Miscellaneous oracles. 8.4-7: Israel's incredible indifference (18.13-17). A man who falls naturally gets up; the birds follow their natural instincts; but Israel, God's people, forgets God's law. 8-9: Word vs. law. Here Jeremiah contrasts his proclaimed *word of the LORD* with the written tradition (*law*) misinterpreted by those who administer it (*scribes*; compare 2.8). 10-12: A doublet of 6.12-15. 13-17: Judah, like an unfruitful *vine* or *fig tree*, will be

- ¹⁴ Why do we sit still?
Gather together, let us go into the
fortified cities
and perish there;
for the LORD our God has doomed
us to perish,
and has given us poisoned water
to drink,
because we have sinned against
the LORD.
- ¹⁵ We looked for peace, but no good
came,
for a time of healing, but behold,
terror.
- ¹⁶ "The snorting of their horses is
heard from Dan;
at the sound of the neighing of
their stallions
the whole land quakes.
They come and devour the land and
all that fills it,
the city and those who dwell in it.
- ¹⁷ For behold, I am sending among
you serpents,
adders which cannot be charmed,
and they shall bite you,"
says the LORD.
- ¹⁸ My grief is beyond healing,^l
my heart is sick within me.
- ¹⁹ Hark, the cry of the daughter of my
people
from the length and breadth of
the land:
"Is the LORD not in Zion?
Is her King not in her?"
"Why have they provoked me to
anger with their graven images,
and with their foreign idols?"
- ²⁰ "The harvest is past, the summer is
ended,
and we are not saved."
- ²¹ For the wound of the daughter of
my people is my heart wounded,
I mourn, and dismay has taken
hold on me.
- ²² Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then has the health of the
daughter of my people
not been restored?
- ⁹^m O that my head were waters,
and my eyes a fountain of tears,
that I might weep day and night
for the slain of the daughter of
my people!
- ²ⁿ O that I had in the desert
a wayfarers' lodging place,
that I might leave my people
and go away from them!
For they are all adulterers,
a company of treacherous men.
- ³ They bend their tongue like a bow;
falsehood and not truth has grown
strong^o in the land;
for they proceed from evil to evil,
and they do not know me, says the
LORD.
- ⁴ Let every one beware of his
neighbor,
and put no trust in any brother;
for every brother is a supplanter,
and every neighbor goes about as
a slanderer.
- ⁵ Every one deceives his neighbor,
and no one speaks the truth;
they have taught their tongue to
speak lies;
they commit iniquity and are too
weary to repent.^p

^l Cn Compare Gk: Heb uncertain
^m Ch 8.23 in Heb ⁿ Ch 9.1 in Heb
^o Gk: Heb and not for truth they have grown strong
^p Cn Compare GK: Heb your dwelling

destroyed (Lk.13.7). Panic-stricken before the invader (unidentifiable here), they seek temporary defense in their fortresses but there is no defense. *Poisoned water* (cup of God's wrath, 9.15; Ps.75.8; Num. ch. 5). *Dan*, northernmost point in Israel. *Serpents* (Ec.10.11; Ps.58.4-5; Num. 21.4-9). **8.18-9.1**: Lament over Judah. It distresses Jeremiah to denounce his people. **20**: They were perhaps suffering from drought (ch. 14). *Daughter of my people*, Judah (4.11). **22**: *Balm in Gilead*, resin from the *Styrax* tree, produced especially in the north Transjordan region of Gilead, widely used for medicinal purposes (46.11; Gen.37.25). **9.2-9**: The complete corruption of the people is the basis for this lament, which thus differs from the preceding. Here, instead of sympathy, Jeremiah has nothing but contempt for the lying, deceiving, untrustworthy nation (11.19-23; 12.6; 20.10). A remote stopping place in the desert would be preferable (1 Kg.19.3-4).

⁶ Heaping oppression upon
oppression, and deceit upon
deceit,
they refuse to know me, says the
LORD.

⁷ Therefore thus says the LORD of
hosts:
"Behold, I will refine them and test
them,
for what else can I do, because
of my people?"

⁸ Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks deceitfully;
with his mouth each speaks
peaceably to his neighbor,
but in his heart he plans an
ambush for him.

⁹ Shall I not punish them for these
things? says the LORD;
and shall I not avenge myself
on a nation such as this?

¹⁰ "Take up^a weeping and wailing for
the mountains,
and a lamentation for the pastures
of the wilderness,
because they are laid waste so that
no one passes through,
and the lowing of cattle is not
heard;
both the birds of the air and the
beasts
have fled and are gone.

¹¹ I will make Jerusalem a heap of
ruins,
a lair of jackals;
and I will make the cities of Judah
a desolation,
without inhabitant."

12 Who is the man so wise that he
can understand this? To whom has the
mouth of the LORD spoken, that he
may declare it? Why is the land ruined
and laid waste like a wilderness, so that
no one passes through? ¹³ And the
LORD says: "Because they have for-

saken my law which I set before them,
and have not obeyed my voice, or
walked in accord with it, ¹⁴ but have
stubbornly followed their own hearts
and have gone after the Ba'als, as their
fathers taught them. ¹⁵ Therefore thus
says the LORD of hosts, the God of Is-
rael: Behold, I will feed this people
with wormwood, and give them poi-
sonous water to drink. ¹⁶ I will scatter
them among the nations whom neither
they nor their fathers have known; and
I will send the sword after them, until
I have consumed them."

¹⁷ Thus says the LORD of hosts:
"Consider, and call for the mourning
women to come;

send for the skilful women to
come;

¹⁸ let them make haste and raise a
wailing over us,
that our eyes may run down with
tears,
and our eyelids gush with water.

¹⁹ For a sound of wailing is heard from
Zion:
'How we are ruined!
We are utterly shamed,
because we have left the land,
because they have cast down our
dwellings.'

²⁰ Hear, O women, the word of the
LORD,
and let your ear receive the word
of his mouth;
teach to your daughters a lament,
and each to her neighbor a dirge.

²¹ For death has come up into our
windows,
it has entered our palaces,
cutting off the children from the
streets
and the young men from the
squares.

²² Speak, "Thus says the LORD:

^a Gk Syr: Heb *I will take up*

9: 5.9. 10-22: Lamentation over Zion. 13-16: A composite commentary on Jeremiah's oracle in vv. 10-12, 17-22 (compare 5.18-19). *Poisonous water*, 8.14; 23.15; Ezek. 23.31-34. Baal worship was man's fabrication, not God's revelation. 10-12, 17-22: The stillness of death shrouds the ruined land (7.34); only the howl of jackals breaks the silence. As customary in the ancient world, professional *mourning women* are hired to bewail the fate of Zion. 21: The verse reflects

'The dead bodies of men shall fall
like dung upon the open field,
like sheaves after the reaper,
and none shall gather them.' "

23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴ but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practice steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the LORD."

25 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will punish all those who are circumcised but yet uncircumcised— ²⁶ Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert that cut the corners of their hair; for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart."

10 Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.

² Thus says the LORD:

"Learn not the way of the nations,
nor be dismayed at the signs of
the heavens
because the nations are dismayed
at them,

³ for the customs of the peoples are
false.

A tree from the forest is cut down,
and worked with an axe by the
hands of a craftsman.

⁴ Men deck it with silver and gold;
they fasten it with hammer and
nails
so that it cannot move.

⁵ Their idols^r are like scarecrows in
a cucumber field,
and they cannot speak;
they have to be carried,
for they cannot walk.
Be not afraid of them,
for they cannot do evil,
neither is it in them to do good."

⁶ There is none like thee, O LORD;
thou art great, and thy name is
great in might.

⁷ Who would not fear thee, O King
of the nations?

For this is thy due;
for among all the wise ones of the
nations
and in all their kingdoms
there is none like thee.

⁸ They are both stupid and foolish;
the instruction of idols is but
wood!

⁹ Beaten silver is brought from
Tarshish,
and gold from Uphaz.

They are the work of the craftsman
and of the hands of the
goldsmith;

their clothing is violet and purple;
they are all the work of skilled
men.

¹⁰ But the LORD is the true God;
he is the living God and the
everlasting King.

At his wrath the earth quakes,
and the nations cannot endure his
indignation.

11 Thus shall you say to them:
"The gods who did not make the heav-
ens and the earth shall perish from
the earth and from under the
heavens."^s

^r Heb They ^s This verse is in Aramaic

the figure of speech of a Canaanite mythological allusion to the god of death. 23-24: True glory (1 Cor.1.31). Man's common goals are nothing (1 Kg.3.10-12) compared with the knowledge of God. 25-26: Though physically circumcised, her neighbors will share with faithless Israel the lot of those not in right relationship with God (Dt.10.16; Rom.2.25-29). *Those who . . . cut . . . their hair*, Arab tribes (25.23). 10.1-16: God and the idols. This passage is a later elaboration of a now lost oracle by Jeremiah (compare Is.44.9-20; Ps.115.3-8), if it is to be ascribed at all to him. 2: *Signs of the heavens* (eclipses, comets, astrological observations) are meaningless. 4: *Men deck it with silver and gold*, compare the description of making an idol in Is.40.18-20; 41.6-7. 5: *They have to be carried*, this theme is effectively presented in Is.46.1-7. *Cucumber field*, Is.1.8. 9: *Tarshish*, Sardinia, or Tartessus in southern Spain. *Uphaz*, unknown. 11: An

- ¹² It is he who made the earth by his power,
who established the world by his wisdom,
and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.
- ¹³ When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens,
and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightnings for the rain,
and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses.
- ¹⁴ Every man is stupid and without knowledge;
every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols;
for his images are false,
and there is no breath in them.
- ¹⁵ They are worthless, a work of delusion;
at the time of their punishment they shall perish.
- ¹⁶ Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob,
for he is the one who formed all things,
and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance;
the LORD of hosts is his name.
- ¹⁷ Gather up your bundle from the ground,
O you who dwell under siege!
- ¹⁸ For thus says the LORD:
"Behold, I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land at this time,
and I will bring distress on them,
that they may feel it."
- ¹⁹ Woe is me because of my hurt!
My wound is grievous.

- But I said, "Truly this is an affliction,
and I must bear it."
- ²⁰ My tent is destroyed,
and all my cords are broken;
my children have gone from me,
and they are not;
there is no one to spread my tent again,
and to set up my curtains.
- ²¹ For the shepherds are stupid,
and do not inquire of the LORD;
therefore they have not prospered,
and all their flock is scattered.
- ²² Hark, a rumor! Behold, it comes!—
a great commotion out of the north country
to make the cities of Judah a desolation,
a lair of jackals.
- ²³ I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself,
that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.
- ²⁴ Correct me, O LORD, but in just measure;
not in thy anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.
- ²⁵ Pour out thy wrath upon the nations
that know thee not,
and upon the peoples that call not on thy name;
for they have devoured Jacob;
they have devoured him and consumed him,
and have laid waste his habitation.

|| The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jeru-

Aramaic gloss (unique in Jeremiah) from about the fifth century B.C. 12-16: He alone (*the portion of Jacob*; Lam.3.24) is worthy of worship (51.15-19). 17-22: Prepare to leave! Related to but later than 9.10-22, this passage describes a siege (perhaps in 597 B.C.) which will not be lifted. In Exile, mother Zion will lose her children (Is.49.14-23; 54.1-3) because of the stupidity of Judah's rulers (*shepherds*). God's role in political events is not to be overlooked. 22b: 9.11. 23-25: Prayer of Jeremiah. While Judah is guilty and deserves punishment (Pr.20.24; compare Rom.1.18-23), God is asked to be merciful and not destroy Judah (Am.7.2-6; Ps.6.1). 25: A later addition, reflecting the sixth century desolation of Judah as an accomplished fact (as in Ps.79.6-7).

salem. ³ You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not heed the words of this covenant ⁴ which I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Listen to my voice, and do all that I command you. So shall you be my people, and I will be your God, ⁵ that I may perform the oath which I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day." Then I answered, "So be it, LORD."

6 And the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: Hear the words of this covenant and do them. ⁷ For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently, even to this day, saying, Obey my voice. ⁸ Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but every one walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not."

9 Again the LORD said to me, "There is revolt among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁰ They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words; they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. ¹¹ Therefore, thus says the LORD, Behold, I am

bringing evil upon them which they cannot escape; though they cry to me, I will not listen to them. ¹² Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they cannot save them in the time of their trouble. ¹³ For your gods have become as many as your cities, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to shame, altars to burn incense to Ba'al.

14 "Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their trouble. ¹⁵ What right has my beloved in my house, when she has done vile deeds? Can vows^a and sacrificial flesh avert your doom? Can you then exult? ¹⁶ The LORD once called you, 'A green olive tree, fair with goodly fruit'; but with the roar of a great tempest he will set fire to it, and its branches will be consumed. ¹⁷ The LORD of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced evil against you, because of the evil which the house of Israel and the house of Judah have done, provoking me to anger by burning incense to Ba'al."

¹⁸ The LORD made it known to me and I knew;
then thou didst show me their evil deeds.

¹⁹ But I was like a gentle lamb
led to the slaughter.
I did not know it was against me
they devised schemes, saying,

^a Gk: Heb *many*

11.1-17: Jeremiah and the covenant. Jeremiah undoubtedly strongly supported Josiah's effort to eradicate practices of foreign worship (2 Kg. chs. 22-23) and to return to the provisions of the Mosaic covenant (v. 3, *this covenant*; v. 10, *my covenant*). Prophetic preaching was based upon the covenant relationship with God. Whether this somewhat re-edited speech is contemporary with Josiah's reform (627 B.C.) or is in retrospect (after 609) cannot be determined. Typically Deuteronomic is the word *command* used of the covenant (Dt.4.13; 6.17; etc.); note also other familiar Deuteronomic phrases: v. 3, Dt.27.26; v. 4, Dt.4.20; v. 5, Dt.7.12-13; v. 8, Dt.29.19. *Iron furnace*, Dt.4.20; 1 Kg.8.51; Is.48.10. Intercession for the apostate people is useless (14.11-12), as are also their rituals. **16:** Symbolic of Judah's destruction is the incineration of the *green olive trees* in the temple area (Ps.52.8).

11.18-12.6: Jeremiah's first personal lament. A plot against the life of Jeremiah (11.18,19; 12.6; 11.20; 12.3b are perhaps to be transposed in this order). The first of Jeremiah's six personal

"Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,
let us cut him off from the land of the living,
that his name be remembered no more."

²⁰ But, O LORD of hosts, who judgest righteously,
who triest the heart and the mind,
let me see thy vengeance upon them,
for to thee have I committed my cause.

21 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of An'athoth, who seek your life, and say, "Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, or you will die by our hand"—²² therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: "Behold, I will punish them; the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine; ²³ and none of them shall be left. For I will bring evil upon the men of An'athoth, the year of their punishment."

12 Righteous art thou, O LORD,
when I complain to thee;
yet I would plead my case before thee.

Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why do all who are treacherous thrive?

² Thou plantest them, and they take root;
they grow and bring forth fruit;
thou art near in their mouth
and far from their heart.

³ But thou, O LORD, knowest me;
thou seest me, and triest my mind
toward thee.

Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,
and set them apart for the day of slaughter.

⁴ How long will the land mourn,
and the grass of every field wither?
For the wickedness of those who dwell in it
the beasts and the birds are swept away,
because men said, "He will not see our latter end."

⁵ "If you have raced with men on foot, and they have wearied you,
how will you compete with horses?
And if in a safe land you fall down,
how will you do in the jungle of the Jordan?"

⁶ For even your brothers and the house of your father,
even they have dealt treacherously with you;
they are in full cry after you;
believe them not,
though they speak fair words to you."

⁷ "I have forsaken my house,
I have abandoned my heritage;
I have given the beloved of my soul
into the hands of her enemies.

⁸ My heritage has become to me
like a lion in the forest,
she has lifted up her voice against me;
therefore I hate her.

⁹ Is my heritage to me like a speckled bird of prey?

laments; the others are 15.10–21; 17.14–18; 18.18–23; 20.7–13; 20.14–18. He learns that he is the unwitting object (*gentle lamb*; compare Is.53.7) of an assassination plot, and prays the omniscient God for protection (17.10; Ps. 26). 21–23: The origin of the grievance against Jeremiah may be his identification of certain fellow citizens with false prophets and priests. In his characteristic phraseology (5.12; 18.21; 19.15; 23.12) their end is foretold. 12.1,2,4b,3a,4a,5: Against the background of the law court, Jeremiah questions the then nearly universal idea that the wicked always suffer and the righteous always prosper. The wicked, ostensibly faithful, prosper (Job. ch. 21; Ps. 73). After Jeremiah's assertion of integrity (Ps.139.23–24), God, by two proverbs, informs him that the present is but a preparation for a more demanding future. *Jungle of the Jordan*, the thickets, abode of wild animals, in the gorge of the Jordan (49.19).

12.7–13: *God's lament*. Using several figures (*beloved of my soul*, 11.15; *lion*; *speckled bird*; *vineyard*, 5.10; Is.5.1–7), God laments the necessary ravaging of Judah (*my house*, Hos.9.15;

Are the birds of prey against her
round about?

Go, assemble all the wild beasts;
bring them to devour.

¹⁰ Many shepherds have destroyed my
vineyard,

they have trampled down my
portion,

they have made my pleasant portion
a desolate wilderness.

¹¹ They have made it a desolation;
desolate, it mourns to me.

The whole land is made desolate,
but no man lays it to heart.

¹² Upon all the bare heights in the
desert

destroyers have come;

for the sword of the LORD devours
from one end of the land to the
other;

no flesh has peace.

¹³ They have sown wheat and have
reaped thorns,

they have tired themselves out
but profit nothing.

They shall be ashamed of their
harvests

because of the fierce anger of the
LORD."

¹⁴ Thus says the LORD concerning
all my evil neighbors who touch the
heritage which I have given my people
Israel to inherit: "Behold, I will pluck
them up from their land, and I will
pluck up the house of Judah from
among them. ¹⁵ And after I have
plucked them up, I will again have
compassion on them, and I will bring
them again each to his heritage and
each to his land. ¹⁶ And it shall come

to pass, if they will diligently learn the
ways of my people, to swear by my
name, 'As the LORD lives,' even as
they taught my people to swear by
Ba'al, then they shall be built up in
the midst of my people. ¹⁷ But if any
nation will not listen, then I will utterly
pluck it up and destroy it, says the
LORD."

13 Thus said the LORD to me, "Go
and buy a linen waistcloth, and
put it on your loins, and do not dip it
in water." ² So I bought a waistcloth
according to the word of the LORD,
and put it on my loins. ³ And the word
of the LORD came to me a second
time, ⁴ "Take the waistcloth which you
have bought, which is upon your loins,
and arise, go to the Euphrates, and
hide it there in a cleft of the rock." ⁵
So I went, and hid it by the Eu-
phra'tes, as the LORD commanded me.
⁶ And after many days the LORD said
to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates,
and take from there the waistcloth
which I commanded you to hide
there." ⁷ Then I went to the Euphra-
tes, and dug, and I took the waistcloth
from the place where I had hidden it.
And behold, the waistcloth was
spoiled; it was good for nothing.

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came
to me: ⁹ "Thus says the LORD: Even
so will I spoil the pride of Judah and
the great pride of Jerusalem. ¹⁰ This
evil people, who refuse to hear my
words, who stubbornly follow their
own heart and have gone after other
gods to serve them and worship them,

u Heb *your*

heritage, 1 Sam.10.1) by the Babylonian-inspired raids of 601 B.C., led by several puppet rulers (*birds of prey, shepherds*), in reprisal for Jehoiakim's short-lived revolt (2 Kg.24.1-4).

12.14-17: Judah's neighbors. If Judah's erstwhile enemies are converted (16.19-21; Ps. 87), God will spare them when Judah is restored; otherwise they will be destroyed (25.12-38). **16: They**, a reference to the Canaanites.

13.1-11: The story of the waistcloth. Using the figure of a linen waistcloth (v. 11; compare Ex.19.6; Lev.16.4), buried in the moist bank of the Euphrates (v. 7), Jeremiah underscores the corrupting effect of Jehoiakim's pro-Babylonian foreign policy (2.18) and the accompanying religious syncretism in Judah (2 Kg.24.1-7). The four hundred miles between Judah and the Euphrates have led some scholars to question whether Jeremiah made the journey, although the prophets sometimes took extreme measures to illustrate an oracle (compare Is.20.1-6; Ezek.4.1-17). It has been interpreted as a parable or vision.

shall be like this waistcloth, which is good for nothing. ¹¹ For as the waistcloth clings to the loins of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, says the LORD, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen.

¹² "You shall speak to them this word: 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "Every jar shall be filled with wine."' And they will say to you, 'Do we not indeed know that every jar will be filled with wine?' ¹³ Then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land: the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And I will dash them one against another, fathers and sons together, says the LORD. I will not pity or spare or have compassion, that I should not destroy them.'"

¹⁵ Hear and give ear; be not proud, for the LORD has spoken.

¹⁶ Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for light he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness.

¹⁷ But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock has been taken captive.

¹⁸ Say to the king and the queen mother:

"Take a lowly seat, for your beautiful crown has come down from your head."

¹⁹ The cities of the Negeb are shut up, with none to open them; all Judah is taken into exile, wholly taken into exile.

²⁰ "Lift up your eyes and see those who come from the north. Where is the flock that was given you, your beautiful flock?

²¹ What will you say when they set as head over you those whom you yourself have taught to be friends to you? Will not pangs take hold of you, like those of a woman in travail?

²² And if you say in your heart, 'Why have these things come upon me?'

it is for the greatness of your iniquity that your skirts are lifted up, and you suffer violence.

²³ Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.

²⁴ I will scatter you^v like chaff driven by the wind from the desert.

²⁵ This is your lot, the portion I have measured out to you, says the LORD, because you have forgotten me and trusted in lies.

^v Gk Syr Vg; Heb obscure ^w Heb them

13.12-14: The allegory of the wine jar. Jeremiah uses a proverb (v. 12a) and the figure of drunkenness (v. 13; compare 25.15-16; Ezek.23.31) to describe the divine judgment.

13.15-17: The last opportunity for repentance is offered to wayward Judah; her captivity is imminent (v. 17). **18-19:** Exile! Almost resignedly, Jeremiah notes the deposition of Jehoiachin (2 Kg.24.8,15), the Babylonian military occupation of Judah (597 B.C.), and the first deportation (Jer.52.28).

13.20-27: Jerusalem's shame. Using a common Biblical simile for judgment, the ravishing of a woman (Is.47.2; here the untrustworthy shepherdess), Jeremiah describes the approaching rape (vv. 22,26) of Jerusalem by Babylon. **20:** North, see 1.13-14 n.; 4.6. Her shamelessness and her shame are directly related. **23:** In her present state, she cannot change herself (Hos.5.4; Jn.8.34; compare 3.22).

²⁶ I myself will lift up your skirts over
your face,
and your shame will be seen.
²⁷ I have seen your abominations,
your adulteries and neighings,
your lewd harlotries,
on the hills in the field.
Woe to you, O Jerusalem!
How long will it be
before you are made clean?"

14 The word of the LORD which
came to Jeremiah concerning the
drought:

² "Judah mourns
and her gates languish;
her people lament on the ground,
and the cry of Jerusalem goes up.
³ Her nobles send their servants for
water;
they come to the cisterns,
they find no water,
they return with their vessels
empty;
they are ashamed and confounded
and cover their heads.

⁴ Because of the ground which is
dismayed,
since there is no rain on the land,
the farmers are ashamed,
they cover their heads.

⁵ Even the hind in the field forsakes
her newborn calf
because there is no grass.

⁶ The wild asses stand on the bare
heights,
they pant for air like jackals;
their eyes fail
because there is no herbage.

⁷ "Though our iniquities testify
against us,
act, O LORD, for thy name's sake;
for our backslidings are many,
we have sinned against thee.

⁸ O thou hope of Israel,
its savior in time of trouble,
why shouldst thou be like a stranger
in the land,
like a wayfarer who turns aside
to tarry for a night?

⁹ Why shouldst thou be like a man
confused,
like a mighty man who cannot
save?

Yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst
of us,
and we are called by thy name;
leave us not."

¹⁰ Thus says the LORD concerning this
people:
"They have loved to wander thus,
they have not restrained their feet;
therefore the LORD does not accept
them,
now he will remember their
iniquity
and punish their sins."

11 The LORD said to me: "Do not
pray for the welfare of this people.

¹² Though they fast, I will not hear
their cry, and though they offer burnt
offering and cereal offering, I will not
accept them; but I will consume them
by the sword, by famine, and by pesti-
lence."

13 Then I said: "Ah, Lord God,
behold, the prophets say to them, 'You
shall not see the sword, nor shall you
have famine, but I will give you as-
sured peace in this place.'"¹⁴ And the
LORD said to me: "The prophets are
prophesying lies in my name; I did
not send them, nor did I command
them or speak to them. They are proph-
esying to you a lying vision, worth-
less divination, and the deceit of their
own minds."¹⁵ Therefore thus says

14.1-16: Lament over catastrophic drought. **2-6:** By examples drawn from city and country, forest and wilderness, Jeremiah describes his people's plight. **7-9:** Prostrate on the ground (v. 2), in the words of a prayer for a Day of Repentance, the people confess their sins and, as they are his covenant people, plead with God to remember them. **10-12:** In their need, they remember God; in their prosperity, they forget him. No intercession or ritual acts will avert the divine punishment (7.16). **13-16:** *In this place*, in the temple. Jeremiah's effort to excuse the people's heedlessness because of misplaced reliance in the false prophets' beguiling message is rejected. The people have made their decision—the wrong one—and will be punished.

the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name although I did not send them, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not come on this land': By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed.¹⁶ And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword, with none to bury them—they, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out their wickedness upon them.

- ¹⁷ "You shall say to them this word:
'Let my eyes run down with tears
night and day,
and let them not cease,
for the virgin daughter of my people
is smitten with a great wound,
with a very grievous blow.
¹⁸ If I go out into the field,
behold, those slain by the sword!
And if I enter the city,
behold, the diseases of famine!
For both prophet and priest ply their
trade through the land,
and have no knowledge.'"

- ¹⁹ Hast thou utterly rejected Judah?
Does thy soul loathe Zion?
Why hast thou smitten us
so that there is no healing for us?
We looked for peace, but no good
came;
for a time of healing, but behold,
terror.
²⁰ We acknowledge our wickedness,
O LORD,
and the iniquity of our fathers,
for we have sinned against thee.
²¹ Do not spurn us, for thy name's
sake;
do not dishonor thy glorious
throne;

remember and do not break thy
covenant with us.

- ²² Are there any among the false gods
of the nations that can bring
rain?

Or can the heavens give showers?
Art thou not he, O LORD our God?
We set our hope on thee,
for thou doest all these things.

- 15** Then the LORD said to me,
"Though Moses and Samuel
stood before me, yet my heart would
not turn toward this people. Send them
out of my sight, and let them go!
² And when they ask you, 'Where shall
we go?' you shall say to them, 'Thus
says the LORD:

"Those who are for pestilence, to
pestilence,
and those who are for the sword,
to the sword;
those who are for famine, to famine,
and those who are for captivity,
to captivity.'"

- ³ "I will appoint over them four kinds
of destroyers, says the LORD: the
sword to slay, the dogs to tear, and the
birds of the air and the beasts of the
earth to devour and destroy. ⁴ And I
will make them a horror to all the
kingdoms of the earth because of what
Manasseh the son of Hezeki'ah, king
of Judah, did in Jerusalem.

- ⁵ "Who will have pity on you, O
Jerusalem,
or who will bemoan you?
Who will turn aside
to ask about your welfare?

- ⁶ You have rejected me, says the
LORD,
you keep going backward;
so I have stretched out my hand
against you and destroyed
you;—

14.17–15.4: Further lament. **14.17–18:** Here Jeremiah describes the calamity, using figures of war, drought, unburied dead, hunger, and confused spiritual leaders. **19–22:** More strongly than in vv. 10–12, the people plead their case, casting themselves wholly on God's mercy. **15.1–4:** If the people's greatest intercessors, *Moses* (Ex.32.11–14; Num.14.13–19; one of four references to Moses in prophetic literature [the others are Mic.6.4; Is.63.11; Mal.4.4]) and *Samuel* (1 Sam.12.17–18), were to plead for them, their sentence of total destruction would not be withdrawn (17.16–17). *Manasseh*, 2 Kg. ch. 21.

15.5–9: Jerusalem's end. Though the passage is later (after 597 B.C.), the preceding theme of

I am weary of relenting.
⁷ I have winnowed them with a winnowing fork
 in the gates of the land;
 I have bereaved them, I have destroyed my people;
 they did not turn from their ways.
⁸ I have made their widows more in number
 than the sand of the seas;
 I have brought against the mothers of young men
 a destroyer at noonday;
 I have made anguish and terror fall upon them suddenly.
⁹ She who bore seven has languished;
 she has swooned away;
 her sun went down while it was yet day;
 she has been shamed and disgraced.
 And the rest of them I will give to the sword
 before their enemies,
 says the LORD."

10 Woe is me, my mother, that you bore me, a man of strife and contention to the whole land! I have not lent, nor have I borrowed, yet all of them curse me. ¹¹ So let it be, O LORD,* if I have not entreated^y thee for their good, if I have not pleaded with thee on behalf of the enemy in the time of trouble and in the time of distress!
¹² Can one break iron, iron from the north, and bronze?

13 "Your wealth and your treasures I will give as spoil, without price, for all your sins, throughout all your territory. ¹⁴ I will make you serve your enemies in a land which you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled which shall burn for ever."

¹⁵ O LORD, thou knowest;
 remember me and visit me,
 and take vengeance for me on my persecutors.
 In thy forbearance take me not away;
 know that for thy sake I bear reproach.
¹⁶ Thy words were found, and I ate them,
 and thy words became to me a joy
 and the delight of my heart;
 for I am called by thy name,
 O LORD, God of hosts.
¹⁷ I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,
 nor did I rejoice;
 I sat alone, because thy hand was upon me,
 for thou hadst filled me with indignation.
¹⁸ Why is my pain unceasing,
 my wound incurable,
 refusing to be healed?
 Wilt thou be to me like a deceitful brook,
 like waters that fail?

¹⁹ Therefore thus says the LORD:
 "If you return, I will restore you,
 and you shall stand before me.
 If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
 you shall be as my mouth.
 They shall turn to you,
 but you shall not turn to them.
²⁰ And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze;
 they will fight against you,
 but they shall not prevail over you,
 for I am with you
 to save you and deliver you,
 says the LORD."

* Gk Old Latin: Heb *the LORD said*
^y Cn: Heb *obscure*

punishment by war continues. 6: *Weary of relenting*, compare Am.7.1-9. 7: *Winnowed them*, a common threshing figure (see Is.21.10; 27.12; Jer.51.2; Mt.3.12; Lk.3.17). 9: *She who bore seven*, a sign of favor (Ru.4.15; 1 Sam.2.5). Jerusalem will be bereaved (compare Hos.9.12).

15.10-21: Jeremiah's second personal lament, see 11.18-12.6 n. 10-18: Jeremiah points to his ostracism and the continued rejection of the life-giving word (v. 16; Ezek.2.8-10; Jn.4.32-34). Verses 13-14 are misplaced from 17.3-4. 15: With the familiar phrase, *thou knowest* (Pss.40.9; 139). Jeremiah prays God for vengeance against his persecutors. 17: *The hand of God*, often the symbol of inspiration (Is.8.11; Ezek.3.14,22), is here a symbol of burden. 19-21: God applies Jeremiah's own message to himself; God promises no respite from opposition, but

²¹ I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless."

16 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place. ³ For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning the mothers who bore them and the fathers who begot them in this land: ⁴ They shall die of deadly diseases. They shall not be lamented, nor shall they be buried; they shall be as dung on the surface of the ground. They shall perish by the sword and by famine, and their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth.

⁵ "For thus says the LORD: Do not enter the house of mourning, or go to lament, or bemoan them; for I have taken away my peace from this people, says the LORD, my steadfast love and mercy. ⁶ Both great and small shall die in this land; they shall not be buried, and no one shall lament for them or cut himself or make himself bald for them. ⁷ No one shall break bread for the mourner, to comfort him for the dead; nor shall any one give him the cup of consolation to drink for his father or his mother. ⁸ You shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink. ⁹ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will make to cease from this place, before your eyes and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

¹⁰ "And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, 'Why has the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?' ¹¹ then you shall say to them: 'Because your fathers have forsaken me, says the LORD, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshiped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law, ¹² and because you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, every one of you follows his stubborn evil will, refusing to listen to me; ¹³ therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.'

¹⁴ "Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' ¹⁵ but 'As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' For I will bring them back to their own land which I gave to their fathers.

¹⁶ "Behold, I am sending for many fishers, says the LORD, and they shall catch them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. ¹⁷ For my eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from me, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes. ¹⁸ And^z I will doubly recompense their iniquity and their sin, be-

^z Gk: Heb *And first*

promising him constant support (1.18-19), urges Jeremiah to continue as his *mouth* (Ex.4.16).

16.1-13: Jeremiah's life, a symbol (Hos.1.2-9; Is.8.3-4). **1-9:** An illustration of 15.17. **1-4:** In view of the impending doom, Jeremiah relinquishes hope for home and family as a sign of the judgment (Ezek.24.15-27; 1 Cor.7.25-40). **5-7:** Israel's faithlessness has nullified God's obligation for covenant loyalty. All symbols of mourning (*cut himself*, 41.5; *make himself bald*, Am.8.10; Is.22.12; compare Dt.14.1) are as futile as death is comfortless. **8-9:** 25.10. **10-13:** So Israel too will be alone (5.18-19).

16.14-15: Israel's homecoming. Their return, accomplished by God's actions, will be celebrated as the new Exodus (the passage duplicates 23.7-8; probably an editorial inclusion here).

16.16-18: No refuge for Israel (continues v. 13). As nothing escapes God's knowledge, so

cause they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations."

¹⁹ O LORD, my strength and my stronghold,
my refuge in the day of trouble,
to thee shall the nations come
from the ends of the earth and
say:

"Our fathers have inherited nought
but lies,
worthless things in which there is
no profit.

²⁰ Can man make for himself gods?
Such are no gods!"

²¹ "Therefore, behold, I will make
them know, this once I will make
them know my power and my might,
and they shall know that my name is
the LORD."

17 "The sin of Judah is written with
a pen of iron; with a point of
diamond it is engraved on the tablet of
their heart, and on the horns of their
altars, ² while their children remem-
ber their altars and their Ashe'rim, be-
side every green tree, and on the high
hills, ³ on the mountains in the open
country. Your wealth and all your
treasures I will give for spoil as the
price of your sin^a throughout all your
territory. ⁴ You shall loosen your
hand^b from your heritage which I
gave to you, and I will make you serve
your enemies in a land which you do
not know, for in my anger a fire is
kindled which shall burn for ever."

⁵ Thus says the LORD:

"Cursed is the man who trusts in
man
and makes flesh his arm,
whose heart turns away from the
LORD.

⁶ He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places
of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

⁷ "Blessed is the man who trusts in
the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.

⁸ He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the
stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of
drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit."

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all
things,
and desperately corrupt;
who can understand it?

¹⁰ "I the LORD search the mind
and try the heart,
to give to every man according to his
ways,
according to the fruit of his
doings."

¹¹ Like the partridge that gathers a
brood which she did not hatch,
so is he who gets riches but not
by right;
in the midst of his days they will
leave him,

^a Cn: Heb *your high places for sin*
^b Cn: Heb *and in you*

no one will escape the Babylonians (*fishers and hunters*; Hab.1.14-15). **18**: Editorial duplication of v. 11.

16.19-21: Conversion of the heathen (Is.45.20-24; Mic.4.1-4). Recognizing the vanity of their idol-worship, all nations will join in worshipping Israel's omnipotent God.

17.1-4: Judah's sin. The practice of the Judeans indelibly and openly demonstrates their attitudes. **1**: *Pen of iron*, a diamond-tipped stylus (Job 19.24). *Horns of altar*, Ex.29.12.

17.5-11: Proverbs. **5-8**: Probable source of Ps. 1. The godless man is like a fruitless desert plant; the godly man is like a fruitful, well-watered tree (Ps.1.3; Pr.3.18). **9-10**: Only God can really understand man (Rom.7.18-19); only God can therefore properly judge man (1 Sam. 16.7; Ps.62.12). **11**: A proverb, perhaps referring to Jehoiakim (22.13; 2 Kg.23.35). **12-13**: *Throne*, the ark in the temple (Is.6.1). *Written in the earth*, assigned to the underworld (Is.4.3). *Fountain*, 2.13.

and at his end he will be a fool.

¹² A glorious throne set on high from the beginning
is the place of our sanctuary.

¹³ O LORD, the hope of Israel,
all who forsake thee shall be put to shame;
those who turn away from thee^c
shall be written in the earth,
for they have forsaken the LORD,
the fountain of living water.

¹⁴ Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;
save me, and I shall be saved;
for thou art my praise.

¹⁵ Behold, they say to me,
"Where is the word of the LORD?
Let it come!"

¹⁶ I have not pressed thee to send evil,
nor have I desired the day of disaster,
thou knowest;
that which came out of my lips
was before thy face.

¹⁷ Be not a terror to me;
thou art my refuge in the day of evil.

¹⁸ Let those be put to shame who persecute me,
but let me not be put to shame;
let them be dismayed,
but let me not be dismayed;
bring upon them the day of evil;
destroy them with double destruction!

19 Thus said the LORD to me: "Go and stand in the Benjamin^d Gate, by which the kings of Judah enter and by which they go out, and in all the gates

of Jerusalem, ²⁰ and say: 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. ²¹ Thus says the LORD: Take heed for the sake of your lives, and do not bear a burden on the sabbath day or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. ²² And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the sabbath or do any work, but keep the sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers. ²³ Yet they did not listen or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck, that they might not hear and receive instruction.

²⁴ "But if you listen to me, says the LORD, and bring in no burden by the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but keep the sabbath day holy and do no work on it, ²⁵ then there shall enter by the gates of this city kings^e who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall be inhabited for ever. ²⁶ And people shall come from the cities of Judah and the places round about Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the Shephe'lah, from the hill country, and from the Negeb, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, cereal offerings and frankincense, and bringing thank offerings to the house of the LORD. ²⁷ But if you do not listen to me, to keep the sabbath day holy, and not to bear a burden and enter by the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched.' "

^c Heb me

^d Cn: Heb sons of people

^e Cn: Heb kings and princes

17.14-18: Jeremiah's third personal lament (see 11.18-12.6 n.). Sick at heart because of his opponents' taunts, Jeremiah prays for healing (Ps.6.2-3). He does not want to see God's day of judgment (Am.5.18; Is.2.11); but if this be the only means of vindication, let it descend in all its fury.

17.19-27: Judah and the sabbath. Perhaps an illustration of 16.11 and an editorial expansion of Jeremiah's oracle citing the violation of the sabbath (Ex.23.12; Neh.13.15-22; compare Mt.12.1-8) as symptomatic of the people's general alienation from God (11.1-8; Am.8.5). Jeremiah's position at the Benjamin Gate (location unknown) would permit all concerned to hear. Only faithfulness would make their sacrifices acceptable (Ps.51.15-19) and preserve their land

18 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶ "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done?" says the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷ If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it. ⁹ And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I had intended to do to it. ¹¹ Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "Thus says the LORD, Behold, I am shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings."

¹² "But they say, 'That is in vain! We will follow our own plans, and will every one act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.'"

¹³ "Therefore thus says the LORD:

Ask among the nations,
who has heard the like of this?

The virgin Israel
has done a very horrible thing.

¹⁴ Does the snow of Lebanon leave
the crags of Si' rion?^f

Do the mountain^g waters run dry,^h
the cold flowing streams?

¹⁵ But my people have forgotten me,
they burn incense to false gods;
they have stumbledⁱ in their ways,
in the ancient roads,
and have gone into bypaths,
not the highway,

¹⁶ making their land a horror,
a thing to be hissed at for ever.

Every one who passes by it is
horrified
and shakes his head.

¹⁷ Like the east wind I will scatter
them
before the enemy.

I will show them my back, not my
face,
in the day of their calamity."

¹⁸ Then they said, "Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not heed any of his words."

¹⁹ Give heed to me, O LORD,
and hearken to my plea.^j

²⁰ Is evil a recompense for good?

^f Cn: Heb *the field* ^g Cn: Heb *foreign*
^h Cn: Heb *Are . . . plucked up?*
ⁱ Gk Syr Vg: Heb *they made them stumble*
^j Gk Compare Syr Tg: Heb *my adversaries*

18.1-12: The allegory of the potter. Probably in Jerusalem's southern section, Jeremiah watched a *potter* shaping the inanimate clay. So God molds his people (Rom.9.20-24). God does not deal capriciously with them. The design for *evil* can be replaced by the design for *good*—if they repent. But they refuse.

18.13-17: A poetic commentary on v. 12. Judah has committed the nearly incredible folly of forsaking her God (2.10,32). God will ignore them (2.27-28) and will scatter them as before the east wind (4.11; 13.24; 23.19). *Sirion*, Mount Hermon. *Mountain waters*, perhaps from the Anti-Lebanon Mountains or from Mount Hermon itself, such as the Pharpar and Abanah rivers or the sources of the Jordan.

18.18-23: Jeremiah's fourth personal lament (see 11.18-12.6 n.). *They* (identity unknown) plot against Jeremiah because of his attacks against the leaders (2.8; 8.8). Jeremiah defends his innocence and prays to God for the merciless, total destruction of his enemies and their families. Note the assignment of the law to the priests (v. 18).

Yet they have dug a pit for my life.

Remember how I stood before thee to speak good for them, to turn away thy wrath from them.

²¹ Therefore deliver up their children to famine; give them over to the power of the sword, let their wives become childless and widowed. May their men meet death by pestilence, their youths be slain by the sword in battle.

²² May a cry be heard from their houses, when thou bringest the marauder suddenly upon them!

For they have dug a pit to take me, and laid snares for my feet.

²³ Yet, thou, O LORD, knowest all their plotting to slay me.

Forgive not their iniquity, nor blot out their sin from thy sight.

Let them be overthrown before thee; deal with them in the time of thine anger.

19 Thus said the LORD, "Go, buy a potter's earthen flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the senior priests, ² and go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you. ³ You shall say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon this place that the ears of every one who hears of it will tingle. ⁴ Because the people have forsaken me, and have profaned this place by burning incense in it to other gods whom neither they

nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, ⁵ and have built the high places of Ba'al to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Ba'al, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind; ⁶ therefore, behold, days are coming, says the LORD, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of Slaughter. ⁷ And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem, and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth. ⁸ And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at; every one who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its disasters. ⁹ And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and every one shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.'

¹⁰ "Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, ¹¹ and shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended. Men shall bury in Topheth because there will be no place else to bury. ¹² Thus will I do to this place, says the LORD, and to its inhabitants, making this city like Topheth. ¹³ The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah—all the houses upon whose roofs incense has been burned to all the host of heaven, and drink offerings have been poured out to

19.1-20.6: The public persecution of Jeremiah. **1-2:** Jeremiah buys a flask and goes to the Potsherd Gate (later called the Dung Gate, Neh.2.13), taking with him some sympathizers. **3-9:** Condemnation of the people for forsaking the LORD and for worshiping idols, and worst of all, for the offering of children to Baal (7.30-32). With a play on the Hebrew words for *flask* and *make void*, Jeremiah announces the people's horrible fate, which will make them resort to cannibalism. **10-15:** The idol-worshipping city, like the flask, will be irreparably smashed; the specter of death will hover over it as over *Topheth* (see 7.31 n.). *Host of heaven*, 8.2; 2 Kg.21.3-5.

other gods—shall be defiled like the place of Topheth.’”

14 Then Jeremiah came from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the LORD's house, and said to all the people: ¹⁵ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing upon this city and upon all its towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their neck, refusing to hear my words.”

20 Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. ² Then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the LORD. ³ On the morrow, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The LORD does not call your name Pashhur, but Terror on every side. ⁴ For thus says the LORD: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon; he shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. ⁵ Moreover, I will give all the wealth of the city, all its gains, all its prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them, and seize them, and carry them to Babylon. ⁶ And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity; to Babylon you shall go; and there you shall die, and there you shall be bur-

ied, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely.”

⁷ O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and thou hast prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; every one mocks me.

⁸ For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long.

⁹ If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

¹⁰ For I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! “Denounce him! Let us denounce him!”

say all my familiar friends, watching for my fall.

“Perhaps he will be deceived, then we can overcome him, and take our revenge on him.”

¹¹ But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten.

¹² O LORD of hosts, who triest the righteous,

20.1-6: To forestall a repetition of this frightful pronouncement, Pashhur of the temple police publicly punishes Jeremiah. On his release (v. 3) he tells Pashhur that *Terror* (6.25; Ps.31.13) will be his name and lot, for he and his family will share the fate of the doomed city (25.8-11).

20.7-13, 14-18: Jeremiah's fifth and sixth personal laments (see 11.18-12.6 n.). **7-9:** Almost blasphemously, Jeremiah accuses God of deceiving him and of exerting irresistible power over him. Regardless of its effect, Jeremiah cannot refrain from his proclamation (Am.3.8; 1 Cor. 9.16). **10-13:** Though his opponents plot his fall, Jeremiah expresses confidence in God's invincible protection of those who rely on him (*the needy*); he uses excerpts from liturgical

who seest the heart and the mind,
let me see thy vengeance upon them,
for to thee have I committed my
cause.

¹³ Sing to the LORD;
praise the LORD!
For he has delivered the life of the
needy
from the hand of evildoers.

¹⁴ Cursed be the day
on which I was born!
The day when my mother bore me,
let it not be blessed!

¹⁵ Cursed be the man
who brought the news to my
father,
"A son is born to you,"
making him very glad.

¹⁶ Let that man be like the cities
which the LORD overthrew
without pity;
let him hear a cry in the morning
and an alarm at noon,

¹⁷ because he did not kill me in the
womb;
so my mother would have been my
grave,
and her womb for ever great.

¹⁸ Why did I come forth from the
womb
to see toil and sorrow,
and spend my days in shame?

21 This is the word which came to
Jeremiah from the LORD, when
King Zedeki'ah sent to him Pashhur
the son of Malchi'ah and Zephani'ah
the priest, the son of Ma-asei'ah, say-
ing, ² "Inquire of the LORD for us, for
Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon is

making war against us; perhaps the
LORD will deal with us according to all
his wonderful deeds, and will make him
withdraw from us."

³ Then Jeremiah said to them:
⁴ "Thus you shall say to Zedeki'ah,
'Thus says the LORD, the God of Is-
rael: Behold, I will turn back the
weapons of war which are in your
hands and with which you are fighting
against the king of Babylon and
against the Chalde'ans who are be-
sieging you outside the walls; and I will
bring them together into the midst of
this city. ⁵ I myself will fight against
you with outstretched hand and strong
arm, in anger, and in fury, and in
great wrath. ⁶ And I will smite the in-
habitants of this city, both man and
beast; they shall die of a great pesti-
lence. ⁷ Afterward, says the LORD, I
will give Zedeki'ah king of Judah, and
his servants, and the people in this
city who survive the pestilence, sword,
and famine, into the hand of Nebu-
chadrez'zar king of Babylon and into
the hand of their enemies, into the
hand of those who seek their lives.
He shall smite them with the edge of
the sword; he shall not pity them, or
spare them, or have compassion.'

⁸ "And to this people you shall say:
'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I set be-
fore you the way of life and the way of
death. ⁹ He who stays in this city shall
die by the sword, by famine, and by
pestilence; but he who goes out and
surrenders to the Chalde'ans who are
besieging you shall live and shall have
his life as a prize of war. ¹⁰ For I have
set my face against this city for evil
and not for good, says the LORD: it shall

hymns (compare Pss.6.9-10; 31.13; 109.30; 140.12-13). **14-18:** In this independent section, Jeremiah curses not God but his own existence (15.10; Job ch. 3). In it one glimpses the inner agony of God's prophet as he confronts the unheeding godlessness of his day.

21.1-24.10: Oracles from the time of Zedekiah. **21.1-10: Oracle against Zedekiah and Jerusalem.** **1-7:** These verses have been regarded by some scholars as another account of the event described in 37.1-10, although the delegation to Jeremiah is a different one (v. 1, compare 37.3) and the Chaldeans here have not yet withdrawn from the city (compare 37.5). The two accounts have much in common (e.g. compare vv. 4,5 and 37.10). Pashhur, the son of Malchiah, appears also in ch. 38. Zephaniah the priest was later executed at Riblah by Nebuchadrezzar (52.24-27). **5a:** Dt.4.34; 5.15. **5b:** Dt.29.28. **8-10:** The only possibility for life is surrender; but Jerusalem will be destroyed (38.17).

be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.'

11 "And to the house of the king of Judah say, 'Hear the word of the LORD,
12 O house of David! Thus says the LORD:

"Execute justice in the morning,
and deliver from the hand of the oppressor
him who has been robbed,
lest my wrath go forth like fire,
and burn with none to quench it,
because of your evil doings.'"

13 "Behold, I am against you, O inhabitant of the valley,
O rock of the plain,
says the LORD;
you who say, 'Who shall come down against us,
or who shall enter our habitations?'

14 I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings,
says the LORD;
I will kindle a fire in her forest,
and it shall devour all that is round about her."

22 Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,
2 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O King of Judah, who sit on the throne of David, you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates. 3 Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent

blood in this place. 4 For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their servants, and their people. 5 But if you will not heed these words, I swear by myself, says the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation. 6 For thus says the LORD concerning the house of the king of Judah:

"You are as Gilead to me,
as the summit of Lebanon,
yet surely I will make you a desert,
an uninhabited city.^k

7 I will prepare destroyers against you,
each with his weapons;
and they shall cut down your choicest cedars,
and cast them into the fire.

8 "'And many nations will pass by this city, and every man will say to his neighbor, 'Why has the LORD dealt thus with this great city?' 9 And they will answer, 'Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.'"

10 Weep not for him who is dead,
nor bemoan him;
but weep bitterly for him who goes away,
for he shall return no more
to see his native land.

11 For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josi'ah his father, and who went away from this place: "He shall return here no more, 12 but in the place where

^k Cn: Heb cities

21.11-23.8: Oracles concerning the royal house. **21.11-22.9:** General oracle. **21.11-14:** The king is to administer justice (1 Kg.3.9; Ps.72.1-4); if he does evil, he will incur the wrath of God. **13:** Text and meaning are unclear. **14:** *Forest* suggests royal palace (1 Kg.7.2). **22.1-5:** Expansion of 21.11-14 (compare 22.3 with 21.12). If the people repent, their destruction will be averted and the Davidic dynasty (*house*) preserved. **6-7:** Continuation of 21.14. Woodsmen (*destroyers*) with axes and saws (*weapons*) will burn the "forest" (cedarwood palace), reducing its once beautiful site to wasteland. **8-9:** A later comment (5.19; Dt.29.23-28; 1 Kg.9.8-9) referring to Jerusalem, not the palace.

22.10-30: Oracles concerning Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin, kings of Judah. **10-12:** The dead Josiah was better off than *Shallum* (personal name of Jehoahaz; 1 Chr.3.15), who in 609 B.C. was banished (*went away*) to Egypt by Neco (2 Kg.23.33-34; 2 Chr.36.1-4; Ezek.19.4).

they have carried him captive, there shall he die, and he shall never see this land again."

¹³ "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing,

and does not give him his wages;
¹⁴ who says, 'I will build myself a great house

with spacious upper rooms,' and cuts out windows for it, paneling it with cedar, and painting it with vermilion.

¹⁵ Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him.

¹⁶ He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well.

Is not this to know me? says the LORD.

¹⁷ But you have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence."

¹⁸ Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah:

"They shall not lament for him, saying, 'Ah my brother!' or 'Ah sister!' They shall not lament for him, saying, 'Ah lord!' or 'Ah his majesty!'"

¹⁹ With the burial of an ass he shall be buried, dragged and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

²⁰ "Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan; cry from Ab'arim, for all your lovers are destroyed.

²¹ I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, 'I will not listen.' This has been your way from your youth, that you have not obeyed my voice.

²² The wind shall shepherd all your shepherds, and your lovers shall go into captivity; then you will be ashamed and confounded because of all your wickedness.

²³ O inhabitant of Lebanon, nested among the cedars, how you will groan! when pangs come upon you, pain as of a woman in travail!"

²⁴ "As I live, says the LORD, though Coni'ah the son of Jehoi'akim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off ²⁵ and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chal-de'ans. ²⁶ I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. ²⁷ But to the land to which they will long to return, there they shall not return."

²⁸ Is this man Coni'ah a despised, broken pot, a vessel no one cares for? Why are he and his children hurled and cast

l Gk Vg Syr: Heb be pitted

13-19: Jeremiah censures Jehoiakim for irresponsibly expanding his palace (*house*) after Egyptian styles (v. 14). Just administration, not the house, makes the king (21.11-12; Mic.3.9-10). Jehoiakim should emulate his *father* Josiah whose death was mourned. His own death will be accompanied by indignities because of his misdeeds (36.30; 2 Kg.24.1-5). **20-30:** From the highest peaks lamentations will rise over the desertion of Jerusalem by her gods (*lovers*; 3.1), the exile of her leaders (*shepherds*; 23.1), and the terror of her king (*inhabitant of Lebanon*; compare 21.13-14) before his fate. The inexorable punishment of Jehoiachin (*Coniah*) and his mother (13.18) is described by the symbol of authority (*signet ring*; Hag.2.23) and a *broken pot*.

into a land which they do not know?

²⁹ O land, land, land,
hear the word of the LORD!

³⁰ Thus says the LORD:

“Write this man down as childless,
a man who shall not succeed in
his days;

for none of his offspring shall succeed
in sitting on the throne of David,
and ruling again in Judah.”

23 “Woe to the shepherds who
destroy and scatter the sheep of
my pasture!” says the LORD. ² There-
fore thus says the LORD, the God of
Israel, concerning the shepherds who
care for my people: “You have scat-
tered my flock, and have driven them
away, and you have not attended to
them. Behold, I will attend to you for
your evil doings, says the LORD.
³ Then I will gather the remnant of my
flock out of all the countries where I
have driven them, and I will bring them
back to their fold, and they shall be
fruitful and multiply. ⁴ I will set shep-
herds over them who will care for them,
and they shall fear no more, nor be dis-
mayed, neither shall any be missing,
says the LORD.

⁵ “Behold, the days are coming,
says the LORD, when I will raise up for
David a righteous Branch, and he shall
reign as king and deal wisely, and shall
execute justice and righteousness in
the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be
saved, and Israel will dwell securely.
And this is the name by which he will
be called: ‘The LORD is our righteous-
ness.’

⁷ “Therefore, behold, the days are

coming, says the LORD, when men shall
no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who
brought up the people of Israel out of
the land of Egypt,’ ⁸ but ‘As the LORD
lives who brought up and led the de-
scendants of the house of Israel out of
the north country and out of all the
countries where he” had driven them.’
Then they shall dwell in their own
land.”

⁹ Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me,
all my bones shake;

I am like a drunken man,
like a man overcome by wine,
because of the LORD
and because of his holy words.

¹⁰ For the land is full of adulterers;
because of the curse the land
mourns,
and the pastures of the
wilderness are dried up.

Their course is evil,
and their might is not right.

¹¹ “Both prophet and priest are
ungodly;
even in my house I have found
their wickedness,

says the LORD.

¹² Therefore their way shall be to them
like slippery paths in the darkness,
into which they shall be driven
and fall;

for I will bring evil upon them
in the year of their punishment,

says the LORD.

¹³ In the prophets of Sama’ria

I saw an unsavory thing:
they prophesied by Ba’al
and led my people Israel astray.

m Gk: Heb I

The threefold address (v. 29a; Is.6.3; Ezek.21.27) emphasizes the following oracle announcing that no descendant of Jehoiachin shall rule Judah.

23.1-8: A messianic oracle. After reproaching Judah’s rulers (*shepherds*; 22.22; Ezek. ch. 34) for scattering Judah (his *flock*), God promises to establish a righteous member (*branch*; Is.11.1; Zech.3.8) of David’s line over a restored Israel (30.9). He will rule responsibly before God as a king (Is.9.2-7), not as a puppet (like Zedekiah). This messianic expectation differs from the later militant nationalism (16.14-15).

23.9-40: Oracles concerning the prophets. 9-12: In the light of God’s will, Jeremiah is distraught over the moral delinquency of *priest* and *prophet*, supposedly guardians of Israel’s faith. 12: By their own devices the prophets will be destroyed. 13-15: In words they are worse than the prophets of Baal in Samaria; and in deeds, worse than the people of Sodom and

¹⁴ But in the prophets of Jerusalem
I have seen a horrible thing:
they commit adultery and walk in
lies;
they strengthen the hands of
evildoers,
so that no one turns from his
wickedness;
all of them have become like Sodom
to me,
and its inhabitants like
Gomor'rah."

¹⁵ Therefore thus says the LORD of
hosts concerning the prophets:

"Behold, I will feed them with
wormwood,
and give them poisoned water to
drink;
for from the prophets of Jerusalem
ungodliness has gone forth into all
the land."

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD of hosts:
"Do not listen to the words of the
prophets who prophesy to you, filling
you with vain hopes; they speak visions
of their own minds, not from the mouth
of the LORD. ¹⁷ They say continually to
those who despise the word of the
LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to
every one who stubbornly follows his
own heart, they say, 'No evil shall
come upon you.'"

¹⁸ For who among them has stood in
the council of the LORD
to perceive and to hear his word,
or who has given heed to his word
and listened?

¹⁹ Behold, the storm of the LORD!
Wrath has gone forth,
a whirling tempest;
it will burst upon the head of the
wicked.

²⁰ The anger of the LORD will not turn
back

until he has executed and
accomplished
the intents of his mind.
In the latter days you will
understand it clearly.

²¹ "I did not send the prophets,
yet they ran;
I did not speak to them,
yet they prophesied.

²² But if they had stood in my council,
then they would have proclaimed
my words to my people,
and they would have turned them
from their evil way,
and from the evil of their doings.

²³ "Am I a God at hand, says the
LORD, and not a God afar off? ²⁴ Can
a man hide himself in secret places so
that I cannot see him? says the LORD.
Do I not fill heaven and earth? says
the LORD. ²⁵ I have heard what the
prophets have said who prophesy lies
in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed,
I have dreamed!' ²⁶ How long shall
there be lies" in the heart of the
prophets who prophesy lies, and who
prophesy the deceit of their own heart,
²⁷ who think to make my people for-
get my name by their dreams which
they tell one another, even as their
fathers forgot my name for Ba'al?
²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell
the dream, but let him who has my word
speak my word faithfully. What has
straw in common with wheat? says the
LORD. ²⁹ Is not my word like fire, says
the LORD, and like a hammer which
breaks the rock in pieces? ³⁰ There-
fore, behold, I am against the prophets,
says the LORD, who steal my words
from one another. ³¹ Behold, I am
against the prophets, says the LORD,
who use their tongues and say, 'Says

n Cn Compare Syr: Heb obscure

Gomorrah. **16–22:** Turning from their deeds to their message, Jeremiah reproves the prophets for their assurance of well-being to those who flout God's word. Obviously they cannot be God's emissaries or his spokesmen (for the divine council, see 1 Kg.22.19–23; Is.6.1–7; 40.1–2). **23–32:** God's omnipresence precludes his being unaware of the prophets' misleading his people by their claims of divine revelation through *dreams* (27.9; 29.8; Dt.13.3; compare 2.8b). **29:** God's living word is devastating as *fire* (5.14) and shattering as a *hammer*. With biting sarcasm (*tell the dream*, v. 28; *steal my words*, v. 30) and threefold emphasis (*behold*, vv. 30,31,32),

the LORD.' ³² Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, says the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them; so they do not profit this people at all, says the LORD.

³³ "When one of this people, or a prophet, or a priest asks you, 'What is the burden of the LORD?' you shall say to them, 'You are the burden,' and I will cast you off, says the LORD.'

³⁴ And as for the prophet, priest, or one of the people who says, 'The burden of the LORD,' I will punish that man and his household. ³⁵ Thus shall you say, every one to his neighbor and every one to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' ³⁶ But 'the burden of the LORD' you shall mention no more, for the burden is every man's own word, and you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God.

³⁷ Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?'

³⁸ But if you say, 'The burden of the LORD,' thus says the LORD, 'Because you have said these words, "The burden of the LORD," when I sent to you, saying, "You shall not say, 'The burden of the LORD,' " ³⁹ therefore, behold, I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence, you and the city which I gave to you and your fathers. ⁴⁰ And I will bring upon you everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.' "

24 After Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, together with the princes of Judah, the crafts-

men, and the smiths, and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me this vision: Behold, two baskets of figs placed before the temple of the LORD.

² One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, but the other basket had very bad figs, so bad that they could not be eaten. ³ And the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I said, "Figs, the good figs very good, and the bad figs very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten."

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁵ "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chalde'ans.

⁶ I will set my eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not uproot them. ⁷ I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

⁸ "But thus says the LORD: Like the bad figs which are so bad they cannot be eaten, so will I treat Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. ⁹ I will make them a horror^p to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a reproach, a byword, a taunt, and a curse in all the places where I shall drive them. ¹⁰ And I will send sword, famine, and pestilence upon them, until they shall be utterly destroyed from the land which I gave to them and their fathers."

^o Gk Vg: Heb *What burden*

^p Compare Gk: Heb *horror for evil*

Jeremiah proclaims God's condemnation of their pretensions. **33**: With bitter irony, Jeremiah uses a play on words. **34-40**: This is a later commentary on v. 33, which it misunderstood, concentrating on the phrase "the burden of the LORD"; it is theologically non-Jeremianic.

24.1-10: The vision of the baskets of figs. Those remaining in Palestine and Egypt (identity of these latter is unknown) after 597 B.C. (*the bad figs*) appropriated the property of those deported (*the good figs*), who were considered the objects of God's wrath (29.15-19; Ezek. 11.14-15). But the exiles will be returned (29.10-14) and will become a faithful nation. The others will be destroyed for their wilful indifference to God's chastisement.

25 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon), ² which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ³ "For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josi'ah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. ⁴ You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, ⁵ saying, 'Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and wrong doings, and dwell upon the land which the LORD has given to you and your fathers from of old and for ever; ⁶ do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.' ⁷ Yet you have not listened to me, says the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.

⁸ "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, ⁹ behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, says the LORD, and for Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about; I will utterly destroy them, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting reproach. ¹⁰ Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of glad-

ness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chalde'ans, for their iniquity, says the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. ¹³ I will bring upon that land all the words which I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. ¹⁴ For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them; and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands."

¹⁵ Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. ¹⁶ They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword which I am sending among them."

¹⁷ So I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and made all the nations to whom the Lord sent me drink it: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and princes, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day; ¹⁹ Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, all his people, ²⁰ and all the foreign folk among them; all the kings of the land of Uz and all the kings of the land of the Philistines (Ash'kelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod); ²¹ Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon; ²² all the kings of Tyre, all the

q GK Compare Syr: Heb desolations

25.1-14: Babylon, God's instrument for punishment. This conclusion to Jeremiah's memoirs (36.1-4) was written after Nebuchadrezzar's victory over Neco of Egypt at Carchemish, in June, 605 B.C. Jeremiah's warnings to Judah are near fulfilment. The foe from the north (6.1) will devastate the apostate land. All manifestations of normal daily life will disappear. No one of this faithless generation will see the restoration "seventy years" later (v. 12; compare Num. 14.20-24). Though Judah's destruction is her punishment, wanton destruction does not go unpunished; ultimately Babylon herself will succumb to her enemies.

25.15-38: The cup of wrath. 15-29: The vision originally introduced the now separated section of oracles against the nations (chs. 46-51; compare 1.5). All nations, because of their transgressions (Am. 1.3-3.2), must suffer God's wrath (vv. 27-29 continue v. 16). The *cup* as a

kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastland across the sea; ²³ Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who cut the corners of their hair; ²⁴ all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed tribes that dwell in the desert; ²⁵ all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media; ²⁶ all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another, and all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth. And after them the king of Babylon^r shall drink.

27 "Then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink, be drunk and vomit, fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I am sending among you.'

28 "And if they refuse to accept the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: You must drink! ²⁹ For behold, I begin to work evil at the city which is called by my name, and shall you go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, says the LORD of hosts.'

30 "You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

'The LORD will roar from on high,
and from his holy habitation
utter his voice;

he will roar mightily against his fold,
and shout, like those who tread
grapes,
against all the inhabitants of the
earth.

³¹ The clamor will resound to the ends
of the earth,
for the LORD has an indictment
against the nations;
he is entering into judgment with all
flesh,

and the wicked he will put to the
sword,

says the LORD.'

³² "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

Behold, evil is going forth
from nation to nation,
and a great tempest is stirring
from the farthest parts of the
earth!

33 "And those slain by the LORD
on that day shall extend from one
end of the earth to the other. They
shall not be lamented, or gathered, or
buried; they shall be dung on the sur-
face of the ground.

³⁴ "Wail, you shepherds, and cry,
and roll in ashes, you lords of the
flock,
for the days of your slaughter and
dispersion have come,
and you shall fall like choice
rams.^s

³⁵ No refuge will remain for the
shepherds,
nor escape for the lords of the
flock.

³⁶ Hark, the cry of the shepherds,
and the wail of the lords of the
flock!

For the LORD is despoiling their
pasture,

³⁷ and the peaceful folds are
devastated,
because of the fierce anger of the
LORD.

³⁸ Like a lion he has left his covert,
for their land has become a waste
because of the sword of the
oppressor,
and because of his fierce anger."

26 In the beginning of the reign
of Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah,

^r Heb *Sheshach*, a cipher for Babylon

^s Gk: Heb *a choice vessel*

symbol of God's judgment (note its equation with *sword*, v. 29) originated perhaps with Jeremiah (8.14; Is.51.17; Ps.11.6). **26:** *Babylon* is written in the Hebrew text as "Sheshach"; this kind of cipher, in which the letters are substituted in reverse order of the Hebrew alphabet, is called "atbash" (see 51.1,41 n.). **30-31:** The judgment is described in conventional figures: roaring (Am.1.2; Ps.46.6); vintage (Is.16.9-10; 63.1-3); courtroom (12.1); sword (12.12). **32-33:** Distant foe (6.22) and heavy casualties (8.2; 16.4). **34-38:** The rulers (*shepherds*, *lords of the flock*) are confused and desperate. **38:** The *lion* is either God, or Nebuchadrezzar (4.7).

26.1-35.19: Events and prophecies (largely from Baruch's memoirs); predictions of restoration.

king of Judah, this word came from the LORD, ² "Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah which come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. ³ It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may repent of the evil which I intend to do to them because of their evil doings. ⁴ You shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law which I have set before you, ⁵ and to heed the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not heeded, ⁶ then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.' "

⁷ The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. ⁸ And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, "You shall die! ⁹ Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?'" And all the people gathered about Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

¹⁰ When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD. ¹¹ Then the priests and the prophets said to the princes and to all the people, "This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has

prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears."

¹² Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying, "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. ¹³ Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will repent of the evil which he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴ But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. ¹⁵ Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears."

¹⁶ Then the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God." ¹⁷ And certain of the elders of the land arose and spoke to all the assembled people, saying, ¹⁸ "Micah of Mo'resheth prophesied in the days of Hezeki'ah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: 'Thus says the LORD of hosts,

Zion shall be plowed as a field;

Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,

and the mountain of the house a wooded height.'

¹⁹ Did Hezeki'ah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and entreat the favor of the LORD, and did not the LORD repent of the evil which he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great evil upon ourselves."

²⁰ There was another man who

26.1-24: The temple sermon. 1-6: The sermon (7.1-15) was delivered perhaps during the Feast of Booths (September-October), 609 B.C. Baruch's summation here contains elements of ch. 7 and other sayings of Jeremiah (4.1-2; 18.7-11; 36.3). **7-19:** Jeremiah's arrest and release. Frequently criticized by Jeremiah (2.8; 5.30-31; 6.13-14), priest and prophet alike would suffer from the temple's destruction. The royal officials assemble to hear the case. Jeremiah's dignified defense wins his release; the judges base their decision on a century-old precedent set by Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.) regarding the prophet Micah. *New Gate*, perhaps the Benjamin Gate, north of the temple (20.2; 2 Kg.15.35). *Avenging of innocent blood*, Gen.4.10; 2 Sam.21.1-14;

prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uri'ah the son of Shema'iah from Kir'iat-jearim. He prophesied against this city and against this land in words like those of Jeremiah.²¹ And when King Jehoi'akim, with all his warriors and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Uri'ah heard of it, he was afraid and fled and escaped to Egypt.²² Then King Jehoi'akim sent to Egypt certain men, Elnathan the son of Achbor and others with him,²³ and they fetched Uri'ah from Egypt and brought him to King Jehoi'akim, who slew him with the sword and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people.

24 But the hand of Ahi'kam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah so that he was not given over to the people to be put to death.

27 In the beginning of the reign of Zedeki'ah^u the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD.² Thus the LORD said to me: "Make yourself thongs and yoke-bars, and put them on your neck.³ Send word^v to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the sons of Ammon, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon by the hand of the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedeki'ah king of Judah.⁴ Give them this charge for their masters: 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: This is what you shall say to your masters: ⁵ "It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men

and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me.⁶ Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him.⁷ All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave.

8 " "But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, says the LORD, until I have consumed it by his hand.⁹ So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers,^w your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who are saying to you, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon.'¹⁰ For it is a lie which they are prophesying to you, with the result that you will be removed far from your land, and I will drive you out, and you will perish.¹¹ But any nation which will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave on its own land, to till it and dwell there, says the LORD." " "

12 To Zedeki'ah king of Judah I spoke in like manner: "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.¹³ Why will you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as the LORD

^u Another reading is *Jehoiakim*

^v Cf: Heb *send them*

^w Gk Syr Vg: Heb *dreams*

1 Kg. ch. 21. 20-24: Martyrdom of Uriah. Baruch adds this story to illustrate Jeremiah's personal danger and fortunate official support (*Ahi'kam*, 2 Kg. 22.12,14). As Egypt's vassal (2 Kg. 23.34-35), Jehoiakim had no difficulty arresting Uriah (*Elnathan*, 36.12,25). His execution is unusual in the annals of Israelite prophetism (2 Chr. 24.20-22; Mt. 23.29-31).

27.1-28.17: The yoke of the king of Babylon. 27.1-11: The yoke of Babylon was imposed by God upon Judah and her neighbors (21.1-10; 32.3-5); thus their plans for rebellion are against God's will. The occasion for the conspiracy lay in a revolt within Nebuchadnezzar's army (December 595-January 594 B.C.) and the accession in Egypt of Psammetichus II (594). Perhaps responding to Jeremiah's warning, Zedekiah did not carry out the rebellion, and so Judah was spared during Nebuchadnezzar's punitive campaign later that year. The form "Nebuchadnezzar" occurs in Jer. chs. 27-29; elsewhere in Jer. "Nebuchadrezzar" appears. The Babylonian form is Nabu-kudurru-usur. 12-15: Jeremiah repeats his warning: since God has not sent the prophets

has spoken concerning any nation which will not serve the king of Babylon? ¹⁴ Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are saying to you, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon,' for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you. ¹⁵ I have not sent them, says the LORD, but they are prophesying falsely in my name, with the result that I will drive you out and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you."

¹⁶ Then I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, 'Behold, the vessels of the LORD's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon,' for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you. ¹⁷ Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a desolation? ¹⁸ If they are prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, then let them intercede with the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem may not go to Babylon. ¹⁹ For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, the sea, the stands, and the rest of the vessels which are left in this city, ²⁰ which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take away, when he took into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem—²¹ thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: ²² They shall be carried to Babylon and remain there until the day when I give attention to them, says the LORD. Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place."

28 In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, ² "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³ Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. ⁴ I will also bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, says the LORD, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon."

⁵ Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD; ⁶ and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words which you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. ⁷ Yet hear now this word which I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. ⁸ The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹ As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet."

¹⁰ Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke-bars from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, and broke them.

¹¹ And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus

who are advising Zedekiah (14.14), they are unreliable guides. **16-22:** He cautions the priests and the people against believing the baseless assurances of these prophets that the temple equipment taken as booty in 597 B.C. would be shortly returned. Instead, they should pray that what they have (Jer.52.17; 2 Kg.25.13) will not also be taken to Babylon. **28.1-17:** Jeremiah and Hananiah. In August 594 B.C., Hananiah faced Jeremiah in the temple and predicted total restoration within two years, breaking Jeremiah's yoke to emphasize his point. Jeremiah

says the LORD: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years." But Jeremiah the prophet went his way.

12 Sometime after the prophet Hanani'ah had broken the yoke-bars from off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ¹³ "Go, tell Hanani'ah, 'Thus says the LORD: You have broken wooden bars, but I^x will make in their place bars of iron.' ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put upon the neck of all these nations an iron yoke of servitude to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him, for I have given to him even the beasts of the field.'"

¹⁵ And Jeremiah the prophet said to the prophet Hanani'ah, "Listen, Hanani'ah, the LORD has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie. ¹⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the LORD.'"

17 In that same year, in the seventh month, the prophet Hanani'ah died.

29 These are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the elders^y of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ² This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem. ³ The letter was sent

by the hand of Ela'sah the son of Shaphan and Gemari'ah the son of Hilki'ah, whom Zedeki'ah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: ⁴ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ⁸ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream, ⁹ for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD.

10 "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I

^x Gk: Heb *you*

^y Gk: Heb *the rest of the elders*

^z Cn: Heb *your dreams which you cause to dream*

recalled that their predecessors had predicted chastisement (Dt.18.20-22; Mic.3.5-12). Because the situation was unchanged, Hananiah's promise, though attractive, seemed very doubtful. Later Jeremiah used the symbolism of an iron yoke to emphasize that the Exile would continue (27.7). *Yoke*, placed on the neck of an ox, held on by leather straps.

29.1-32: Jeremiah's letters to Babylon. 1-23: Letter to the exiles. The exiles were being misled by the same baseless assurances of speedy return as those in Palestine (ch. 27). To counter this Jeremiah sent a letter by *Elasah* (perhaps the brother of Ahikam, 26.24) and *Gemariah* (36.10) to the *elders* of the people (Ezek.8.1; 14.1). His advice was revolutionary. They were to establish homes in Babylonia and even assist in the welfare of the state. God would be with them and would ultimately restore them (*seventy years*, 25.11; 27.7). Two colleagues of Hananiah, Ahab and Zedekiah (v. 21), were condemned by Jeremiah (compare Ezek. ch. 13). He pre-

will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

15 "Because you have said, 'The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon,'— 16 Thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile:

17 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs which are so bad they cannot be eaten. 18 I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them,

19 because they did not heed my words, says the LORD, which I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, says the LORD.— 20 Hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

21 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah and Zedeki'ah the son of Ma-asei'ah, who are prophesying a lie to you in my name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes. 22 Because of them this curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: "The LORD make you like Zedeki'ah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire," 23 because they have committed folly in Israel, they

have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, and they have spoken in my name lying words which I did not command them. I am the one who knows, and I am witness, says the LORD.'"

24 To Shemai'ah of Nehel'am you shall say: 25 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You have sent letters in your name to all the people who are in Jerusalem, and to Zephani'ah the son of Ma-asei'ah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, 26 'The LORD has made you priest instead of Jehoi'ada the priest, to have charge in the house of the LORD over every madman who prophesies, to put him in the stocks and collar. 27 Now why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of An'athoth who is prophesying to you? 28 For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, "Your exile will be long; build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their produce."'"

29 Zephani'ah the priest read this letter in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet. 30 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 31 "Send to all the exiles, saying, 'Thus says the LORD concerning Shemai'ah of Nehel'am: Because Shemai'ah has prophesied to you when I did not send him, and has made you trust in a lie, 32 therefore thus says the LORD: Behold, I will punish Shemai'ah of Nehel'am and his descendants; he shall not have any one living among this people to see^a the good that I will do to my people, says the LORD, for he has talked rebellion against the LORD.'"

30 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 "Thus

^a Gk: Heb and he shall not see

dicted their execution; from the Babylonian point of view it would be for political subversion, not for the reason mentioned in v. 23. Verses 21–23 should follow v. 15; vv. 16–20 are an editorial comment on Jeremiah's letter. 24–32: Jeremiah and Shemaiah. Another "colleague" of Hananiah, Shemaiah, wrote from Babylon a scathing letter to the new temple overseer (compare 20.1), Zephaniah, charging him with dereliction of duty in not arresting Jeremiah for his letter (above). Instead Zephaniah (21.1; 37.3) read the letter to his friend Jeremiah. The latter sent another letter to the exiles, condemning Shemaiah and predicting that neither he nor his descendants would see the day of restoration (20.6).

30.1–31.40: The Book of Consolation. 30.1–4: Introduction. Initially collected by Baruch,

says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you.³ For behold, days are coming, says the LORD, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the LORD, and I will bring them back to the land which I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it."

4 These are the words which the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah:

5 "Thus says the LORD:

We have heard a cry of panic,
of terror, and no peace.

6 Ask now, and see,
can a man bear a child?

Why then do I see every man
with his hands on his loins like a
woman in labor?

Why has every face turned pale?

7 Alas! that day is so great
there is none like it;
it is a time of distress for Jacob;
yet he shall be saved out of it.

8 "And it shall come to pass in that day, says the LORD of hosts, that I will break the yoke from off their^b neck, and I will burst their^b bonds, and strangers shall no more make servants of them.^c ⁹ But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

10 "Then fear not, O Jacob my servant, says the LORD,
nor be dismayed, O Israel;
for lo, I will save you from afar,
and your offspring from the land
of their captivity.
Jacob shall return and have quiet
and ease,
and none shall make him afraid.

11 For I am with you to save you,
says the LORD;

I will make a full end of all the
nations
among whom I scattered you,
but of you I will not make a full
end.

I will chasten you in just measure,
and I will by no means leave you
unpunished.

12 "For thus says the LORD:

Your hurt is incurable,
and your wound is grievous.

13 There is none to uphold your cause,
no medicine for your wound,
no healing for you.

14 All your lovers have forgotten you;
they care nothing for you;
for I have dealt you the blow of an
enemy,

the punishment of a merciless foe,
because your guilt is great,
because your sins are flagrant.

15 Why do you cry out over your hurt?
Your pain is incurable.

Because your guilt is great,
because your sins are flagrant,
I have done these things to you.

16 Therefore all who devour you shall
be devoured,
and all your foes, every one of
them, shall go into captivity;
those who despoil you shall become
a spoil,
and all who prey on you I will
make a prey.

17 For I will restore health to you,
and your wounds I will heal,
says the LORD,
because they have called you an
outcast:
'It is Zion, for whom no one
cares!'

^b Gk Old Latin: Heb your
^c Heb make a servant of him

most of chs. 30–31 reflect the period 622–609 B.C. (3.1–4.4). 5–9: Oracles concerning Israel. After the travail (6.24) of God's judgment (*that day* [of the LORD], Am.5.18–20), God will break the yoke and a Davidic king will again rule Israel (23.5–6; Hos.3.5). 10–11: *Fear not*, common phrase in God's address to man, Gen.15.1; Is.35.4; Lk.2.10. *Not make a full end*, a remnant will be left (see 4.27; 5.10,18; compare 46.27–28). 12–17: Though ostensibly incurably wounded (8.22; 14.17) and deserted (4.30; 13.21) because of her sinfulness, Israel will be healed (Hos.14.4) and her oppressors (the notoriously cruel Assyrians) despoiled (9.25–26; 25.13–14). 18–22: *The city* (probably Samaria) will be *rebuilt upon its mound*; it was customary in antiquity

- ¹⁸ "Thus says the LORD:
Behold, I will restore the fortunes of
the tents of Jacob,
and have compassion on his
dwellings;
the city shall be rebuilt upon its
mound,
and the palace shall stand where
it used to be.
- ¹⁹ Out of them shall come songs of
thanksgiving,
and the voices of those who make
merry.
I will multiply them, and they
shall not be few;
I will make them honored, and
they shall not be small.
- ²⁰ Their children shall be as they were
of old,
and their congregation shall be
established before me;
and I will punish all who oppress
them.
- ²¹ Their prince shall be one of
themselves,
their ruler shall come forth
from their midst;
I will make him draw near, and he
shall approach me,
for who would dare of himself to
approach me?
- says the LORD.
- ²² And you shall be my people,
and I will be your God."
- ²³ Behold the storm of the LORD!
Wrath has gone forth,
a whirling tempest;
it will burst upon the head of the
wicked.
- ²⁴ The fierce anger of the LORD will
not turn back
until he has executed and
accomplished

the intents of his mind.

In the latter days you will
understand this.

31 "At that time, says the LORD,
I will be the God of all the fami-
lies of Israel, and they shall be my peo-
ple."

² Thus says the LORD:

"The people who survived the sword
found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,

³ the LORD appeared to him^d
from afar.

I have loved you with an
everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my
faithfulness to you.

⁴ Again I will build you, and you shall
be built,

O virgin Israel!

Again you shall adorn yourself with
timbrels,
and shall go forth in the dance of
the merry-makers.

⁵ Again you shall plant vineyards
upon the mountains of Sama'ria;
the planters shall plant,
and shall enjoy the fruit.

⁶ For there shall be a day when
watchmen will call
in the hill country of E'phraim:
'Arise, and let us go up to Zion,
to the LORD our God.' "

⁷ For thus says the LORD:

"Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of
the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
'The LORD has saved his people,
the remnant of Israel.'

⁸ Behold, I will bring them from the
north country,

d Gk: Heb me

to rebuild on the leveled rubble of the preceding city, producing the present flat-topped hills, called tells. **21:** *Make him draw near* refers to the danger of approaching God (Ex.19.21; 33.20; Num.8.19). **22:** 7.23; 11.4; 24.7. **30.23-31.1:** The storm of the LORD. **30.23-24** = 23.19-20. **31.1:** This emphasizes the inclusiveness of the term *Israel*; compare 30.22. **2-6:** With a formula taken from the Exodus narrative (*found grace* [favor], Ex.33.12-17; compare Jer.23.7-8) and the emphatic historical-theological implications of *everlasting love* and *faithfulness*, God promises the joyful restoration of all Israel, including the renewal of pilgrimages to the Jerusalem temple (*Zion*; 41.5). **7-14:** Homecoming. God will assemble the dispersed in their homeland (Is.35.5-10; Ps.23.2-3). *Israel . . . Ephraim, my first-born* (Ex.4.22), as Ephraim is restored,

- and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
the woman with child and her who is in travail, together;
a great company, they shall return here.
- ⁹ With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations^e I will lead them back,
I will make them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I am a father to Israel,
and E'phraim is my first-born.
- ¹⁰ "Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands afar off;
say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.'
- ¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
- ¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall be like a watered garden,
and they shall languish no more.
- ¹³ Then shall the maidens rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
- ¹⁴ I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance,
and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness,
says the LORD."
- ¹⁵ Thus says the LORD:
"A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are not."
- ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD:
"Keep your voice from weeping,
and your eyes from tears;
for your work shall be rewarded,
says the LORD,
and they shall come back from the land of the enemy.
- ¹⁷ There is hope for your future,
says the LORD,
and your children shall come back to their own country.
- ¹⁸ I have heard E'phraim bemoaning,
'Thou hast chastened me, and I was chastened,
like an untrained calf;
bring me back that I may be restored,
for thou art the LORD my God.
- ¹⁹ For after I had turned away I repented;
and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh;
I was ashamed, and I was confounded,
because I bore the disgrace of my youth.'
- ²⁰ Is E'phraim my dear son?
Is he my darling child?
For as often as I speak against him,
I do remember him still.
Therefore my heart yearns for him;

^e Gk Compare Vg Tg: Heb *supplications*

so is all Israel (including Judah; 2.3; 3.19). **12:** Praises to God will be raised far (*coastlands*, Ps.72.10-11; Is.41.1,5) and near for deliverance (*shepherd*, Is.40.11; *redeem*, Is.48.20). **14:** Bountiful produce of the land will mark the new age of well-being (Is.58.11). **15-22:** *Rachel*, mother of Joseph and Benjamin (Gen.30.22; 35.16-20; 1 Sam.10.2), laments their (the northern tribes') exile (*Ramah*, 1 Sam.8.4). Matthew 2.18 depicts unmitigated grief, but here the verse introduces the promise of restoration. **18:** *Ephraim* (Joseph's son, Gen.41.50-52) repents (3.22-25; Hos.6.1-3); to prevent repeating his past errors he is admonished to note the *waymarks*

I will surely have mercy on him,
says the LORD.

²¹ "Set up waymarks for yourself,
make yourself guideposts;
consider well the highway,
the road by which you went.
Return, O virgin Israel,
return to these your cities.

²² How long will you waver,
O faithless daughter?
For the LORD has created a new
thing on the earth:
a woman protects a man."

²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel: "Once more they shall
use these words in the land of Judah
and in its cities, when I restore their
fortunes:

'The LORD bless you, O habitation
of righteousness,
O holy hill!'

²⁴ And Judah and all its cities shall
dwell there together, and the farmers
and those who wander^f with their
flocks. ²⁵ For I will satisfy the weary
soul, and every languishing soul I will
replenish."

²⁶ Thereupon I awoke and looked,
and my sleep was pleasant to me.

²⁷ "Behold, the days are coming,
says the LORD, when I will sow the
house of Israel and the house of Judah
with the seed of man and the seed of
beast. ²⁸ And it shall come to pass
that as I have watched over them to
pluck up and break down, to over-
throw, destroy, and bring evil, so I will
watch over them to build and to plant,
says the LORD. ²⁹ In those days they
shall no longer say:

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,

and the children's teeth are set on
edge.'

³⁰ But every one shall die for his own
sin; each man who eats sour grapes, his
teeth shall be set on edge.

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming,
says the LORD, when I will make a new
covenant with the house of Israel and
the house of Judah, ³² not like the
covenant which I made with their
fathers when I took them by the hand
to bring them out of the land of Egypt,
my covenant which they broke, though
I was their husband, says the LORD.

³³ But this is the covenant which I
will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the LORD: I will
put my law within them, and I will
write it upon their hearts; and I will be
their God, and they shall be my peo-
ple. ³⁴ And no longer shall each man
teach his neighbor and each his
brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for
they shall all know me, from the least
of them to the greatest, says the
LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity,
and I will remember their sin no
more."

³⁵ Thus says the LORD,
who gives the sun for light by day
and the fixed order of the moon
and the stars for light by night,
who stirs up the sea so that its waves
roar—

the LORD of hosts is his name:

³⁶ "If this fixed order departs
from before me, says the LORD,
then shall the descendants of Israel
cease
from being a nation before me for
ever."

f Cn Compare Syr Vg Tg: Heb and they shall wander

(sign-posts) leading to his punishment. ²²: *A new thing*, compare Is.43.19. *A woman protects a man*, she does not have to be protected by a man; compare Is.11.6-9 for the reversal of the usual in the new age. ²³⁻⁴⁰: Restoration and the new covenant. The following oracles are after 587 B.C. ²³⁻³⁰: As God depopulated and depleted Judah (1.10), he will also restore it (Ezek. 36.8-11) and reunite it with Israel (vv. 2-14; Is.11.11-16). ²⁹⁻³⁰: This may reflect the contemporary problem (Dt.24.16), discussed in some detail by Ezekiel (ch. 18). ³¹⁻³⁴: Using the oldest expression for covenant making ("to cut a covenant") and opposing what was an increasingly limited concept of the Sinai covenant, the prophet affirms that God will *make a new covenant* (32.38-40; Heb.8.8-12; 10.16-17) inscribed in the hearts of men (17.1; Ezek.11.19; Hos.2.20). ³⁵⁻³⁷: The seemingly eternal cycle of nature (5.22) is used to emphasize God's

³⁷ Thus says the LORD:

"If the heavens above can be measured,
and the foundations of the earth below can be explored,
then I will cast off all the descendants of Israel
for all that they have done,"
says the LORD."

38 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the tower of Han'anel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹ And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Go'ah. ⁴⁰ The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be uprooted or overthrown any more for ever."

32 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedeki'ah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. ² At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard which was in the palace of the king of Judah. ³ For Zedeki'ah king of Judah had imprisoned him, saying, "Why do you prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; ⁴ Zedeki'ah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the

Chalde'ans, but shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye; ⁵ and he shall take Zedeki'ah to Babylon, and there he shall remain until I visit him, says the LORD; though you fight against the Chalde'ans, you shall not succeed?'"

⁶ Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me: ⁷ Behold, Han'amel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you and say, 'Buy my field which is at An'athoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.' ⁸ Then Han'amel my cousin came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Buy my field which is at An'athoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

⁹ "And I bought the field at An'athoth from Han'amel my cousin, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. ¹¹ Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy; ¹² and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neri'ah son of Mahsei'ah, in the presence of Han'amel my cousin, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Jews who were sitting in the court of the guard. ¹³ I charged Baruch in their presence, say-

assurance of Israel's continued existence (Is.44.24; 54.9-10). **38-40:** This passage, coming from after the time of Jeremiah (compare Zech.14.10-11), describes Jerusalem's four corners: northeast (*Hananel*, Neh.3.1), northwest (Corner Gate, 2 Kg.14.13), southeast and southwest (*Gareb*, *Goah*, both unidentified); and southern (Hinnom, 7.31-32) and eastern (Kidron, 2 Kg.23.4,6) boundaries. *Horse Gate* (southeast corner), Neh.3.28.

32.1-44: Jeremiah purchases land in Anathoth. **1-5:** For background, see ch. 37 (date: early 587 B.C.). Chronologically the account should follow ch. 37. Its being placed here emphasizes the validity of the preceding oracles concerning Judah's restoration. **6-15:** To prevent the loss of family property, Jeremiah's cousin, *Hanamel*, offered to sell his land to Jeremiah (Lev.25.25-28). This is the most detailed account of a business transaction in the Bible (compare Gen.23.1-16). *Seventeen shekels* (about seven ounces) refers to weight, not coins. The official copy of the deed, written on papyrus, was rolled up and sealed; *the open copy* was for easy reference. Similar storage of deeds in earthen jars is known from Elephantine in Egypt. *Baruch*, Jeremiah's secretary, see ch. 36. Jeremiah's purchase illustrates his confidence in the future of

ing, ¹⁴ 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware vessel, that they may last for a long time. ¹⁵ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.'

¹⁶ "After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neri'ah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: ¹⁷ 'Ah Lord God! It is thou who hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and by thy outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for thee, ¹⁸ who showest steadfast love to thousands, but dost requite the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God whose name is the LORD of hosts, ¹⁹ great in counsel and mighty in deed; whose eyes are open to all the ways of men, rewarding every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings; ²⁰ who hast shown signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all mankind, and hast made thee a name, as at this day. ²¹ Thou didst bring thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror; ²² and thou gavest them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; ²³ and they entered and took possession of it. But they did not obey thy voice or walk in thy law; they did nothing of all thou didst command them to do. Therefore thou hast made all this evil come upon them. ²⁴ Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it, and because of

sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chalde'ans who are fighting against it. What thou didst speak has come to pass, and behold, thou seest it. ²⁵ Yet thou, O Lord GOD, hast said to me, "Buy the field for money and get witnesses"—though the city is given into the hands of the Chalde'ans."

²⁶ The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁷ "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me? ²⁸ Therefore, thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hands of the Chalde'ans and into the hand of Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. ²⁹ The Chalde'ans who are fighting against this city shall come and set this city on fire, and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs incense has been offered to Ba'al and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods, to provoke me to anger. ³⁰ For the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; the sons of Israel have done nothing but provoke me to anger by the work of their hands, says the LORD. ³¹ This city has aroused my anger and wrath, from the day it was built to this day, so that I will remove it from my sight ³² because of all the evil of the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah which they did to provoke me to anger—their kings and their princes, their priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ³³ They have turned to me their back and not their face; and though I have taught them persistently they have not listened to receive instruction. ³⁴ They set up their abominations in the house which is called by my name,

Judah. 16-44: This section is probably editorial, a later expansion of the preceding theme of the future of Judah. First is a formal prayer (vv. 16-25), drawn perhaps from liturgical sources (Neh.9.6-38). After praising God's omnipotence (10.16; 27.5), his omniscience (17.10), and his wondrous deeds in Israel's behalf (11.5), Jeremiah discreetly questions the wisdom of his purchase in view of the circumstances (vv. 24-25). God's answer (vv. 26-44) summarizes Jeremiah's (and the Deuteronomic) interpretation of the contemporary critical events. After a résumé of Judah's idolatry (incense, wine and oil offered on the rooftops, 19.13; comparative sinfulness of Israel and Judah, 3.6-11; human sacrifices, 7.30-32) and her stubborn indifference to God's warnings (17.21-23), her imminent destruction (in conventional terms: sword,

to defile it.³⁵ They built the high places of Ba'al in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

36 "Now therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence':³⁷ Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety.³⁸ And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.³⁹ I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.⁴⁰ I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.⁴¹ I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

42 "For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them.⁴³ Fields shall be bought in this land of which you are saying, It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chalde'ans.⁴⁴ Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed, in the land of Benjamin, in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephe'-

lah, and in the cities of the Negeb; for I will restore their fortunes, says the LORD."

33 The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard:² "Thus says the LORD who made the earth,^g the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name:³ Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things which you have not known.⁴ For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah which were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and before the sword:^h ⁵ The Chalde'ans are coming in to fightⁱ and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall smite in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their wickedness.⁶ Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance^j of prosperity and security.⁷ I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first.⁸ I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me.⁹ And this city^k shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them; they shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.

10 "Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, 'It is a waste

^g Gk: Heb *it* ^h Heb *obscure*

ⁱ Cn: Heb *They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans*

^j Heb *uncertain* ^k Heb *and it*

pestilence, and famine, 14.11–12; 21.7) is affirmed. The section concludes with assurances of restoration, first with reference to the new covenant (31.31–34) and then the exchange and holding of property (vv. 42–44).

33.1–26: Appendix to the Book of Consolation. 1: Editorial connection with preceding chapter. 2: Liturgical doxology (Am.4.13; Is.45.18). 3: Apocalyptic overtones. 4: In siege defense measures, there was demolition of houses abutting against the wall to allow for easier troop movements (Is.22.10). 5–9: After punishment (and repentance) will come healing (3.22; 30.17), forgiveness, and the city will be to God a joyful name (renown), *praise*, and *glory* before

without man or beast,' in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again ¹¹ the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD:

'Give thanks to the LORD of hosts,
for the LORD is good,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever!'

For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD.

12 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: In this place which is waste, without man or beast, and in all of its cities, there shall again be habitations of shepherds resting their flocks. ¹³ In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephe'lah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD.

14 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

17 "For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, ¹⁸ and

the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn cereal offerings, and to make sacrifices for ever."

19 The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁰ "Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, ²¹ then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. ²² As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me."

23 The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁴ "Have you not observed what these people are saying, 'The LORD has rejected the two families which he chose'? Thus they have despised my people so that they are no longer a nation in their sight. ²⁵ Thus says the LORD: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his descendants to rule over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes, and will have mercy upon them."

34 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion and all the peoples were fighting against Jeru-

all the Gentile nations (13.11; Dt.26.19). **10-11:** The silence of death (7.34) will be broken by the sounds of life (30.19) and songs of praise (Ps. 136). **12-13:** Shepherds will again find pasture in the once desolate land (31.12; Ezek.20.37). **14-26:** Commentary on 23.5-6, from the time of Haggai and Zechariah (520 B.C.); these verses are lacking in the Septuagint. **14-18:** There will be not one but a succession of Davidic rulers (2 Sam.7.16; 1 Kg.9.5). The Deuteronomic reference to *Levitical priests* is unique in Jeremiah (Dt.18.1-5). **16:** The new *name* of Jerusalem (see Is.1.26 n.). **22:** A reinterpretation of Gen.22.17-18. **23-26:** As night follows day (31.35-37; Gen.1.5; 8.22), God's promise to the patriarchs (compare Rom.4.13) and David will be kept.

34.1-7: Warning to Zedekiah. The siege of Jerusalem (January 588 B.C.) was but weeks away;

saalem and all of its cities: ² "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Go and speak to Zedeki'ah king of Judah and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. ³ You shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be captured and delivered into his hand; you shall see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak with him face to face; and you shall go to Babylon.' ⁴ Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedeki'ah king of Judah! Thus says the LORD concerning you: 'You shall not die by the sword. ⁵ You shall die in peace. And as spices were burned for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so men shall burn spices for you and lament for you, saying, "Alas, lord!"' For I have spoken the word, says the LORD."

⁶ Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedeki'ah king of Judah, in Jerusalem, ⁷ when the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and against all the cities of Judah that were left, Lachish and Aze'kah; for these were the only fortified cities of Judah that remained.

⁸ The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after King Zedeki'ah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to make a proclamation of liberty to them, ⁹ that every one should set free his Hebrew slaves, male and female, so that no one should enslave a Jew, his brother. ¹⁰ And they obeyed, all the princes and all the people who had entered into the covenant

that every one would set free his slave, male or female, so that they would not be enslaved again; they obeyed and set them free. ¹¹ But afterward they turned around and took back the male and female slaves they had set free, and brought them into subjection as slaves. ¹² The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ¹³ "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, ¹⁴ 'At the end of six' years each of you must set free the fellow Hebrew who has been sold to you and has served you six years; you must set him free from your service.' But your fathers did not listen to me or incline their ears to me. ¹⁵ You recently repented and did what was right in my eyes by proclaiming liberty, each to his neighbor, and you made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name; ¹⁶ but then you turned around and profaned my name when each of you took back his male and female slaves, whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your slaves. ¹⁷ Therefore, thus says the LORD: You have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim to you liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine, says the LORD. I will make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. ¹⁸ And the men who transgressed my covenant

1 Gk: Heb *seven*

only *Lachish* (twenty-three miles southwest of Jerusalem) and *Azekah* (eleven miles north of Lachish) held out. Warning Zedekiah of Jerusalem's imminent destruction and his own captivity, Jeremiah assured Zedekiah of a peaceful death and appropriate funeral rites (but compare 52.8-11).

34.8-22: Manumission of slaves and perfidy of the Jerusalemites. Probably to simplify the problem of the domestic food supply, to free more men for Jerusalem's defense, and to propitiate the LORD, Zedekiah proclaimed the manumission of all slaves. But when the Egyptian army approached (37.6-15), causing the Babylonians temporarily to lift the siege, the manumission was rescinded. **13-22:** Making reference to Ex.21.2 and Dt.15.1,2, Jeremiah condemned this perfidy as one more example of notorious faithlessness. He assured the people of punishment like that implied in their covenant ritual (v. 18; Gen.15.9-17); the transgressor should suffer the same fate as the slaughtered animal, a practice known from non-Biblical sources also. The use of the ancient formula "cut a covenant" is noteworthy here (in vv. 8,13,15, etc.,

and did not keep the terms of the covenant which they made before me, I will make like^m the calf which they cut in two and passed between its parts—¹⁹ the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf; ²⁰ and I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives. Their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth. ²¹ And Zedeki'ah king of Judah, and his princes I will give into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon which has withdrawn from you. ²² Behold, I will command, says the LORD, and will bring them back to this city; and they will fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire. I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant."

35 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah: ² "Go to the house of the Re'chabites, and speak with them, and bring them to the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers; then offer them wine to drink." ³ So I took Ja-azani'ah the son of Jeremiah, son of Habazzini'ah, and his brothers, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Re'chabites. ⁴ I brought them to the house of the LORD into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdali'ah, the man of God, which was near the chamber of the princes, above the chamber of Ma-asei'ah the son of Shal-

lum, keeper of the threshold. ⁵ Then I set before the Re'chabites pitchers full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine." ⁶ But they answered, "We will drink no wine, for Jon'adab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, 'You shall not drink wine, neither you nor your sons for ever; ⁷ you shall not build a house; you shall not sow seed; you shall not plant or have a vineyard; but you shall live in tents all your days, that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn.'" ⁸ We have obeyed the voice of Jon'adab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he commanded us, to drink no wine all our days, ourselves, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, ⁹ and not to build houses to dwell in. We have no vineyard or field or seed; ¹⁰ but we have lived in tents, and have obeyed and done all that Jon'adab our father commanded us. ¹¹ But when Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon came up against the land, we said, 'Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chalde'ans and the army of the Syrians.' So we are living in Jerusalem."

¹² Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ¹³ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will you not receive instruction and listen to my words? says the LORD. ¹⁴ The command which Jon'adab the son of Rechab gave to his sons, to drink no wine, has been kept; and they drink none to this day, for they have obeyed their father's command. I have spoken to you persistently, but you have not listened to

m Cn: Heb lacks like

"made" is literally "cut"; see 31.31 n.) rather than the Deuteronomic formula "command a covenant."

35.1-19: The symbol of the Rechabites. The Rechabites were a religious order, similar to the Nazirites (Num.6.1-21), founded by Jonadab, son of Rechab, during the reign of Jehu (842-815 B.C.). Religious fanatics, they assisted Jehu in the blood-bath accompanying the revolt against the dynasty of Omri (2 Kg.10.15-28). They held that the more sophisticated sedentary life in Canaan jeopardized the purity of the worship of the LORD. Consequently, returning to desert ways, they lived in tents, were shepherds, and abstained from wine (for symbolic, not religious reasons). Jeremiah's association with them does not imply acceptance of their position, but only the approbation of their faithfulness to their principles, in contrast to Judah's

me. ¹⁵ I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land which I gave to you and your fathers.' But you did not incline your ear or listen to me. ¹⁶ The sons of Jon'adab the son of Rechab have kept the command which their father gave them, but this people has not obeyed me. ¹⁷ Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing on Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken to them and they have not listened, I have called to them and they have not answered."

18 But to the house of the Re'chabites Jeremiah said, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the command of Jon'adab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done all that he commanded you, ¹⁹ therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Jon'adab the son of Rechab shall never lack a man to stand before me."

36 In the fourth year of Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josi'ah until today. ³ It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I intend to do to them, so that every one

may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neri'ah, and Baruch wrote upon a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD which he had spoken to him. ⁵ And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, "I am debarred from going to the house of the LORD; ⁶ so you are to go, and on a fast day in the hearing of all the people in the LORD's house you shall read the words of the LORD from the scroll which you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come out of their cities. ⁷ It may be that their supplication will come before the LORD, and that every one will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and wrath that the LORD has pronounced against this people." ⁸ And Baruch the son of Neri'ah did all that Jeremiah the prophet ordered him about reading from the scroll the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.

9 In the fifth year of Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD. ¹⁰ Then, in the hearing of all the people, Baruch read the words of Jeremiah from the scroll, in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemari'ah the son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper court, at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house.

11 When Micai'ah the son of Gemari'ah, son of Shaphan, heard all the

faithlessness. The occasion is probably the crisis of 601 B.C. (see 12.7-13 n.). *Maaseiah*, perhaps the father of Zephaniah (compare 21.1).

36.1-45.5: The trials and the sufferings of Jeremiah. **36.1-32: Jeremiah, Jehoiakim, and the scrolls.** **1-4:** In the light of portentous contemporary events (25.1-14), Jeremiah commissioned *Baruch, the son of Neriah* and brother of Seraiah (32.12; 51.59), to transcribe his oracles (*words of the LORD*) on a papyrus scroll. *Fourth year*, 605 B.C. **5-10:** For an unknown reason, Jeremiah was barred from the temple; so, on the occasion of a fast proclaimed by Jehoiakim because of Nebuchadrezzar's advance against Ashkelon (in November, 604 B.C.), he instructed Baruch to read the scroll in his stead. *Shaphan*, a friend of Jeremiah (26.24). **11-19:** Baruch was asked to re-read the scroll before an assembly of royal officials. Deeply impressed, they

words of the LORD from the scroll, ¹² he went down to the king's house, into the secretary's chamber; and all the princes were sitting there: Eli'shama the secretary, Delai'ah the son of Shemai'ah, Elna'than the son of Achbor, Gemari'ah the son of Shaphan, Zedeki'ah the son of Hanani'ah, and all the princes. ¹³ And Micai'ah told them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the scroll in the hearing of the people. ¹⁴ Then all the princes sent Jehu'di the son of Nethani'ah, son of Shelemi'ah, son of Cush, to say to Baruch, "Take in your hand the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch the son of Neri'ah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. ¹⁵ And they said to him, "Sit down and read it." So Baruch read it to them. ¹⁶ When they heard all the words, they turned one to another in fear; and they said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to the king." ¹⁷ Then they asked Baruch, "Tell us, how did you write all these words? Was it at his dictation?" ¹⁸ Baruch answered them, "He dictated all these words to me, while I wrote them with ink on the scroll." ¹⁹ Then the princes said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah, and let no one know where you are."

²⁰ So they went into the court to the king, having put the scroll in the chamber of Eli'shama the secretary; and they reported all the words to the king. ²¹ Then the king sent Jehu'di to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Eli'shama the secretary; and Jehu'di read it to the king and all the princes who stood beside the king. ²² It was the ninth month, and the king was sitting in the winter house

and there was a fire burning in the brazier before him. ²³ As Jehu'di read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them into the fire in the brazier, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier. ²⁴ Yet neither the king, nor any of his servants who heard all these words, was afraid, nor did they rend their garments. ²⁵ Even when Elna'than and Delai'ah and Gemari'ah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. ²⁶ And the king commanded Jerah'meel the king's son and Serai'ah the son of Az'ri-el and Shelemi'ah the son of Abdeel to seize Baruch the secretary and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.

²⁷ Now, after the king had burned the scroll with the words which Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁸ "Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which Jehoi'akim the king of Judah has burned. ²⁹ And concerning Jehoi'akim king of Judah you shall say, 'Thus says the LORD, You have burned this scroll, saying, "Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will cut off from it man and beast?" ³⁰ Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoi'akim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. ³¹ And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity; I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them, but they would not hear.'"

resolved to inform Jehoiakim. Sensing the possibility of repercussions, they instructed Baruch and Jeremiah to go into hiding. **20-26:** Jehoiakim ordered the scroll brought from the court scribe's office. Despite protests from some officials, he burned it as it was read, three or four columns at a time. Irritated by its contents, Jehoiakim ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch. *Penknife*, a knife used to sharpen the point of the scribes' quill pens. **27-32:** Using the destruction of the scroll as a symbol, Jeremiah announced the ignominious death of Jehoiakim (22.18-19; 2 Kg.24.6-15) and dictated an expanded copy of the scroll (probably contained largely in chs. 1-25).

32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neri'ah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll which Jehoi'akim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them.

37 Zedeki'ah the son of Josi'ah, whom Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, reigned instead of Coni'ah the son of Jehoi'akim. ² But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of the LORD which he spoke through Jeremiah the prophet.

³ King Zedeki'ah sent Jehu'cal the son of Shelemi'ah, and Zephani'ah the priest, the son of Ma-asei'ah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "Pray for us to the LORD our God." ⁴ Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. ⁵ The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt; and when the Chalde'ans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

⁶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet: ⁷ "Thus says the LORD, God of Israel: Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me, 'Behold, Pharaoh's army which came to help you is about to return to Egypt, to its own land. ⁸ And the Chalde'ans shall come back and fight against this city; they shall take it and burn it with fire. ⁹ Thus says the LORD, Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chal-de'ans will surely stay away from us," for they will not stay away. ¹⁰ For even if you should defeat the whole army

of Chalde'ans who are fighting against you, and there remained of them only wounded men, every man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire.'"

¹¹ Now when the Chalde'an army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh's army, ¹² Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his portionⁿ there among the people. ¹³ When he was at the Benjamin Gate, a sentry there named Iri'jah the son of Shelemi'ah, son of Hanani'ah, seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are deserting to the Chalde'ans." ¹⁴ And Jeremiah said, "It is false; I am not deserting to the Chalde'ans." But Iri'jah would not listen to him, and seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. ¹⁵ And the princes were enraged at Jeremiah, and they beat him and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for it had been made a prison.

¹⁶ When Jeremiah had come to the dungeon cells, and remained there many days, ¹⁷ King Zedeki'ah sent for him, and received him. The king questioned him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there any word from the LORD?" Jeremiah said, "There is." Then he said, "You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." ¹⁸ Jeremiah also said to King Zedeki'ah, "What wrong have I done to you or your servants or this people, that you have put me in prison? ¹⁹ Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you and against this land'? ²⁰ Now hear, I pray you, O my lord the king: let my humble plea

ⁿ Heb obscure

37.1-38.28: Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the siege. **37.1-2:** Editorial transition from ch. 36 to 37. **3-10:** Shortly after his accession (spring, 588 B.C.), an army of Pharaoh Hophra (Apries) came up from Egypt to relieve besieged Jerusalem (34.21). The inhabitants concluded that a deliverance as in the days of Hezekiah (2 Kg.19.32-37) had occurred, but Jeremiah warned them that such optimism was wholly unwarranted. **11-15:** Leaving the city by the Benjamin Gate (20.2), Jeremiah was arrested on suspicion of desertion (38.18-19), perhaps based on oracles such as 21.1-10. **12:** *To receive his portion*; see 32.6-15, which may suggest the occasion. **16-21:** In a secret interview, Zedekiah sought reassurance for his ill-advised revolt, but in vain (21.2). He modified Jeremiah's imprisonment to house arrest, and guaranteed him a

come before you, and do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, lest I die there.” ²¹ So King Zedeki’ah gave orders, and they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard; and a loaf of bread was given him daily from the bakers’ street, until all the bread of the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

38 Now Shephati’ah the son of Mattan, Gedali’ah the son of Pashhur, Jucal the son of Shelemi’ah, and Pashhur the son of Malchi’ah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people, ² “Thus says the LORD, He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out to the Chalde’ans shall live; he shall have his life as a prize of war, and live. ³ Thus says the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and be taken.” ⁴ Then the princes said to the king, “Let this man be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm.” ⁵ King Zedeki’ah said, “Behold, he is in your hands; for the king can do nothing against you.” ⁶ So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchi’ah, the king’s son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mire, and Jeremiah sank in the mire.

⁷ When E’bed-mel’ech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king’s

house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern—the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate—⁸ E’bed-mel’ech went from the king’s house and said to the king, ⁹ “My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern; and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city.” ¹⁰ Then the king commanded E’bed-mel’ech, the Ethiopian, “Take three men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.” ¹¹ So E’bed-mel’ech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a wardrobe of^o the storehouse, and took from there old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes. ¹² Then E’bed-mel’ech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, “Put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes.” Jeremiah did so. ¹³ Then they drew Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

¹⁴ King Zedeki’ah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and received him at the third entrance of the temple of the LORD. The king said to Jeremiah, “I will ask you a question; hide nothing from me.” ¹⁵ Jeremiah said to Zedeki’ah, “If I tell you, will you not be sure to put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me.” ¹⁶ Then King Zedeki’ah swore secretly to Jeremiah, “As the LORD lives, who made our souls, I will not put you to death or deliver you into the hand of these men who seek your life.”

^o Cn: Heb to under

minimum food ration as long as there were supplies. **38.1–13:** Jeremiah’s continued insistence on surrender to Nebuchadrezzar was dangerous for Zedekiah’s pro-Egyptian counselors (*Gedaliah, son of Pashhur*, 20.1; *Jucal* = *Jehucal*, 37.3; *Pashhur*, 21.1). They persuaded the vacillating Zedekiah that Jeremiah was subverting the war effort (there is similar phraseology in a letter written eighteen months earlier, found in the excavations at Lachish). **6:** The *cistern* was nearly dry, indicating a time shortly before Nebuchadrezzar’s final assault August 587 B.C. (52.5–7). Ironically, Jeremiah was delivered from murder at the hands of his countrymen by a foreign court official (who was not necessarily a *eunuch* physically, v. 7). **14–28:** Uncertain and fearful, Zedekiah again (37.17–20) summoned Jeremiah for a private interview (location of *third entrance* is unknown). Justifiably suspicious, Jeremiah exacted an oath from Zedekiah

17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedeki'ah, "Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, If you will surrender to the princes of the king of Babylon, then your life shall be spared, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live.

¹⁸ But if you do not surrender to the princes of the king of Babylon, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chalde'ans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand." ¹⁹ King Zedeki'ah said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have deserted to the Chal-de'ans, lest I be handed over to them and they abuse me." ²⁰ Jeremiah said, "You shall not be given to them. Obey now the voice of the LORD in what I say to you, and it shall be well with you, and your life shall be spared. ²¹ But if you refuse to surrender, this is the vision which the LORD has shown to me: ²² Behold, all the women left in the house of the king of Judah were being led out to the princes of the king of Babylon and were saying,

'Your trusted friends have deceived you

and prevailed against you;
now that your feet are sunk in the mire,

they turn away from you.'

²³ All your wives and your sons shall be led out to the Chal-de'ans, and you yourself shall not escape from their hand, but shall be seized by the king of Babylon; and this city shall be burned with fire."

24 Then Zedeki'ah said to Jeremiah, "Let no one know of these words and you shall not die. ²⁵ If the princes hear that I have spoken with you and come to you and say to you, 'Tell us

what you said to the king and what the king said to you; hide nothing from us and we will not put you to death,' ²⁶ then you shall say to them, 'I made a humble plea to the king that he would not send me back to the house of Jonathan to die there.'" ²⁷ Then all the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him, and he answered them as the king had instructed him. So they left off speaking with him, for the conversation had not been overheard. ²⁸ And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken.

39 In the ninth year of Zedeki'ah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it; ² in the eleventh year of Zedeki'ah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, a breach was made in the city. ³ When Jerusalem was taken,^p all the princes of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate: Ner'gal-share'zer, Sam'gar-ne'bo, Sar'sechim the Rab'saris, Ner'gal-share'zer the Rabmag, with all the rest of the officers of the king of Babylon. ⁴ When Zedeki'ah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled, going out of the city at night by way of the king's garden through the gate between the two walls; and they went toward the Arabah. ⁵ But the army of the Chal-de'ans pursued them, and overtook Zedeki'ah in the plains of Jericho; and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon, at Riblah, in the land of Hamath; and he passed sentence upon him. ⁶ The king

^p This clause has been transposed from the end of Chapter 38

for his safety. He repeated his counsel of "surrender and live" (20.1-16; 21.4-10; 27.1-11) and emphasized it by relating a vision depicting the capture of the royal household and the burning of Jerusalem (*in the mire* recalls Jeremiah's own recent experience, 38.6). Jeremiah assured Zedekiah of safety from Judean deserters (39.9), if he surrendered. Zedekiah characteristically hesitated, exacted a promise of secrecy from Jeremiah, and returned him to house arrest (37.21).

39.1-40.6: Jeremiah and the fall of Jerusalem. **39.1-14:** Verses 1-10 summarize 52.4-16 (2 Kg.25.1-12) adding the names of Babylonian officials (v. 3). Alternative reading of v. 3: "... Nergal-sharezer the Simmagir, Nebushazban the chief court official, Nergal-sharezer the Rabmag..." Simmagir and Rabmag are titles of Babylonian officials. According to 52.6-14,

of Babylon slew the sons of Zedeki'ah at Riblah before his eyes; and the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. ⁷ He put out the eyes of Zedeki'ah, and bound him in fetters to take him to Babylon. ⁸ The Chalde'ans burned the king's house and the house of the people, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹ Then Nebu'zarad'an, the captain of the guard, carried into exile to Babylon the rest of the people who were left in the city, those who had deserted to him, and the people who remained. ¹⁰ Nebu'zarad'an, the captain of the guard, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

¹¹ Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon gave command concerning Jeremiah through Nebu'zarad'an, the captain of the guard, saying, ¹² "Take him, look after him well and do him no harm, but deal with him as he tells you." ¹³ So Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard, Nebushaz'ban the Rab'saris, Ner'gal-share'zer the Rabmag, and all the chief officers of the king of Babylon ¹⁴ sent and took Jeremiah from the court of the guard. They entrusted him to Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people.

¹⁵ The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the guard: ¹⁶ "Go, and say to E'bed-mel'ech the Ethiopian, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will fulfil my words against this city for evil and not for good, and they shall be accomplished before you on that day. ¹⁷ But I will deliver you on that day, says the LORD, and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are

afraid. ¹⁸ For I will surely save you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but you shall have your life as a prize of war, because you have put your trust in me, says the LORD.'"

40 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he took him bound in chains along with all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon. ² The captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him, "The LORD your God pronounced this evil against this place; ³ the LORD has brought it about, and has done as he said. Because you sinned against the LORD, and did not obey his voice, this thing has come upon you. ⁴ Now, behold, I release you today from the chains on your hands. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you well; but if it seems wrong to you to come with me to Babylon, do not come. See, the whole land is before you; go wherever you think it good and right to go. ⁵ If you remain, ⁹ then return to Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon appointed governor of the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people; or go wherever you think it right to go." So the captain of the guard gave him an allowance of food and a present, and let him go. ⁶ Then Jeremiah went to Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, at Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land.

⁷ When all the captains of the forces in the open country and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'

q Syr: Heb obscure

the sack of Jerusalem (v. 8) occurred a month after its capture. **15-18:** This oracle, assuring Ebed-melech of his personal safety because of his trust in God, is a continuation of 38.13. **40.1-6:** Ramah (31.15) was a transit point for deportees. For reasons unknown, Jeremiah was allowed to choose exile or residence in Judah. Choosing the latter, he was placed in the custody of Gedaliah, the newly-appointed governor of Judah with whose family Jeremiah had long been friendly (26.24; 36.10).

40.7-41.18: The third revolt. **40.7-12:** Gedaliah, a member of a prominent Judean family

kam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, and children, those of the poorest of the land who had not been taken into exile to Babylon, ⁸ they went to Gedali'ah at Mizpah—Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah, Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah, Serai'ah the son of Tanhu'meth, the sons of Ephai the Netoph'athite, Jezani'ah the son of the Ma-ac'athite, they and their men. ⁹ Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, son of Shaphan, swore to them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chalde'ans. Dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. ¹⁰ As for me, I will dwell at Mizpah, to stand for you before the Chalde'ans who will come to us; but as for you, gather wine and summer fruits and oil, and store them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken." ¹¹ Likewise, when all the Jews who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom and in other lands heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, son of Shaphan, as governor over them, ¹² then all the Jews returned from all the places to which they had been driven and came to the land of Judah, to Gedali'ah at Mizpah; and they gathered wine and summer fruits in great abundance.

¹³ Now Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah and all the leaders of the forces in the open country came to Gedali'ah at Mizpah ¹⁴ and said to him, "Do you know that Ba'alís the king of the Ammonites has sent Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah to take your life?" But Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam would

not believe them. ¹⁵ Then Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah spoke secretly to Gedali'ah at Mizpah, "Let me go and slay Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah, and no one will know it. Why should he take your life, so that all the Jews who are gathered about you would be scattered, and the remnant of Judah would perish?" ¹⁶ But Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam said to Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah, "You shall not do this thing, for you are speaking falsely of Ish'mael."

41 In the seventh month, Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah, son of Eli'shama, of the royal family, one of the chief officers of the king, came with ten men to Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, at Mizpah. As they ate bread together there at Mizpah, ² Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah and the ten men with him rose up and struck down Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed him, whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor in the land. ³ Ish'mael also slew all the Jews who were with Gedali'ah at Mizpah, and the Chalde'an soldiers who happened to be there.

⁴ On the day after the murder of Gedali'ah, before any one knew of it, ⁵ eighty men arrived from Shechem and Shiloh and Sama'ria, with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, and their bodies gashed, bringing cereal offerings and incense to present at the temple of the LORD. ⁶ And Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah came out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he came. As he met them, he said to them, "Come in to Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam." ⁷ When they came into the city,

(2 Kg.22.12-14), assured his countrymen that he would represent them before the Babylonians (*Chaldeans*) and urged them to return to their fields and cities. Benjamin seems to have been largely spared (32.1-8; Neh. ch. 7) and *Mizpah* (perhaps at present-day Tell en-Nasbeh, seven miles north of Jerusalem) became the provincial capital. **40.13-41.3**: After about five prosperous years and with encouragement from Baalis of Ammon (for political reasons), Ishmael, a member of the royal family (as Gedaliah was not) and a super-patriot, plotted Gedaliah's assassination. When told of it, Gedaliah discredited the report. Probably in September 582 B.C. (52.30), Gedaliah, his entourage, and the Babylonian garrison in Mizpah, were slain. **4-10**: The next day Ishmael intercepted a group from the north on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Luring them into Mizpah, he slaughtered all but ten who bought their lives with *stores* of food. After

Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah and the men with him slew them, and cast them into a cistern. ⁸ But there were ten men among them who said to Ish'mael, "Do not kill us, for we have stores of wheat, barley, oil, and honey hidden in the fields." So he refrained and did not kill them with their companions.

⁹ Now the cistern into which Ish'mael cast all the bodies of the men whom he had slain was the large cistern^r which King Asa had made for defense against Ba'asha king of Israel; Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah filled it with the slain. ¹⁰ Then Ish'mael took captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the people who were left at Mizpah, whom Nebu'zarad'an, the captain of the guard, had committed to Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam. Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah took them captive and set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

¹¹ But when Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah and all the leaders of the forces with him heard of all the evil which Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah had done, ¹² they took all their men and went to fight against Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah. They came upon him at the great pool which is in Gibeon. ¹³ And when all the people who were with Ish'mael saw Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah and all the leaders of the forces with him, they rejoiced. ¹⁴ So all the people whom Ish'mael had carried away captive from Mizpah turned about and came back, and went to Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah. ¹⁵ But Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah escaped from Joha'nán with eight men, and went to the Ammonites. ¹⁶ Then Joha'-

nan the son of Kare'ah and all the leaders of the forces with him took all the rest of the people whom Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah had carried away captive^s from Mizpah after he had slain Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam—soldiers, women, children, and eunuchs, whom Joha'nán brought back from Gibeon. ¹⁷ And they went and stayed at Geruth Chimham near Bethlehem, intending to go to Egypt ¹⁸ because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, because Ish'mael the son of Nethani'ah had slain Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.

42 Then all the commanders of the forces, and Joha'nán the son of Kare'ah and Azari'ah^r the son of Hoshai'ah, and all the people from the least to the greatest, came near ² and said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Let our supplication come before you, and pray to the LORD your God for us, for all this remnant (for we are left but a few of many, as your eyes see us), ³ that the LORD your God may show us the way we should go, and the thing that we should do." ⁴ Jeremiah the prophet said to them, "I have heard you; behold, I will pray to the LORD your God according to your request, and whatever the LORD answers you I will tell you; I will keep nothing back from you." ⁵ Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act according to all the word with which the LORD your God sends you to us. ⁶ Whether it is good or evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you, that it may

^r Gk: Heb he had slain by the hand of Gedaliah

^s Cn: Heb whom he recovered from Ishmael

^t Gk: Heb Jezaniah

casting the bodies into an old cistern (1 Kg.15.22), the assassins took the remaining people in Mizpah and headed for Ammon. **11-18:** An avenging group under Johanan overtook Ishmael at Gibeon (28.1; 2 Sam.2.13). In the melee, Ishmael and eight conspirators escaped to Ammon (40.14), but their captives were freed. Fearing Babylonian reprisals Johanan's group turned toward Egypt, encamping en route at *Geruth Chimham* (perhaps "Chimham's Inn") near Bethlehem.

42.1-43.7: Flight to Egypt. **42.1-6:** Jeremiah may have been one of the captives freed by Johanan (41.16). He was asked to intercede (15.11) for the group, who were uncertain what they should do and where they should go. To remain could mean reprisals from Babylon (52.30);

be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.”

7 At the end of ten days the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. ⁸ Then he summoned Joha’nan the son of Kare’ah and all the commanders of the forces who were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest, ⁹ and said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your supplication before him: ¹⁰ If you will remain in this land, then I will build you up and not pull you down; I will plant you, and not pluck you up; for I repent of the evil which I did to you. ¹¹ Do not fear the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not fear him, says the LORD, for I am with you, to save you and to deliver you from his hand. ¹² I will grant you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and let you remain in your own land. ¹³ But if you say, ‘We will not remain in this land,’ disobeying the voice of the LORD your God ¹⁴ and saying, ‘No, we will go to the land of Egypt, where we shall not see war, or hear the sound of the trumpet, or be hungry for bread, and we will dwell there,’ ¹⁵ then hear the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: If you set your faces to enter Egypt and go to live there, ¹⁶ then the sword which you fear shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine of which you are afraid shall follow hard after you to Egypt; and there you shall die. ¹⁷ All the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to live there shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; they shall have no remnant or survivor

from the evil which I will bring upon them.

18 “For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: As my anger and my wrath were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so my wrath will be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You shall become an execration, a horror, a curse, and a taunt. You shall see this place no more. ¹⁹ The LORD has said to you, O remnant of Judah, ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ Know for a certainty that I have warned you this day ²⁰ that you have gone astray at the cost of your lives. For you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the LORD our God, and whatever the LORD our God says declare to us and we will do it.’ ²¹ And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God in anything that he sent me to tell you. ²² Now therefore know for a certainty that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to live.”

43 When Jeremiah finished speaking to all the people all these words of the LORD their God, with which the LORD their God had sent him to them, ² Azari’ah the son of Hoshai’ah and Joha’nan the son of Kare’ah and all the insolent men said to Jeremiah, “You are telling a lie. The LORD our God did not send you to say, ‘Do not go to Egypt to live there’; ³ but Baruch the son of Neri’ah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chalde’ans, that they may kill us or take us into exile in Babylon.” ⁴ So Joha’nan the son of Kare’ah and

to flee would mean safety, though with a *de facto* admission of guilt. 7–22: After ten days, Jeremiah brought the reply: to remain was God’s will (29.1–14; 32.6–15) and they would receive God’s blessing; to flee would only bring suffering upon the fugitives. 43.1–7: Apparently the tension in the camp during the ten days that followed allowed those who favored the flight to prevail over the good intentions of those who wished to abide by Jeremiah’s oracle. Jeremiah was accused of being unduly influenced by Baruch, and his oracle was not regarded as God’s word. It has been suggested that 42.19–22 should come between verses 3 and 4 as Jeremiah’s response to Azariah and his colleagues, since 42.19–22 may indicate that the decision had already been made to go to Egypt; Jeremiah reminded them of their earlier resolve and the danger of disobeying the LORD’s will. They decided to go to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them, perhaps to assure themselves of the continuing availability of oracles

all the commanders of the forces and all the people did not obey the voice of the LORD, to remain in the land of Judah. ⁵ But Joha'nān the son of Kare'ah and all the commanders of the forces took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to live in the land of Judah from all the nations to which they had been driven— ⁶ the men, the women, the children, the princesses, and every person whom Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard had left with Gedali'ah the son of Ahi'kam, son of Shaphan; also Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neri'ah. ⁷ And they came into the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. And they arrived at Tah'panhes.

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in Tah'panhes: ⁹ "Take in your hands large stones, and hide them in the mortar in the pavement which is at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tah'panhes, in the sight of the men of Judah, ¹⁰ and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and he^u will set his throne above these stones which I have hid, and he will spread his royal canopy over them. ¹¹ He shall come and smite the land of Egypt, giving to the pestilence those who are doomed to the pestilence, to captivity those who are doomed to captivity, and to the sword those who are doomed to the sword. ¹² He^v shall kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them and carry them

away captive; and he shall clean the land of Egypt, as a shepherd cleans his cloak of vermin; and he shall go away from there in peace. ¹³ He shall break the obelisks of Heliopolis which is in the land of Egypt; and the temples of the gods of Egypt he shall burn with fire.'"

44 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews that dwelt in the land of Egypt, at Migdol, at Tah'panhes, at Memphis, and in the land of Pathros, ² "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen all the evil that I brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah. Behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them, ³ because of the wickedness which they committed, provoking me to anger, in that they went to burn incense and serve other gods that they knew not, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers. ⁴ Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!' ⁵ But they did not listen or incline their ear, to turn from their wickedness and burn no incense to other gods. ⁶ Therefore my wrath and my anger were poured forth and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they became a waste and a desolation, as at this day. ⁷ And now thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel: Why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and

^u Gk Syr: Heb I

^v Gk Syr Vg: Heb I

from God. **7:** *Tahpanhes*, Egyptian border fortress, also known as Baal-Zephon, Greek Daphne, modern Tell Defneh (2.16).

43.8–45.5: Jeremiah in Egypt. **43.8–13:** This oracle is intended to show that Egypt is no safe refuge from Nebuchadrezzar (*my servant*, 25.9; 27.6), who led a successful raid against Amasis (Ahmosis II) in 568/567 B.C., probably some years later than this oracle (46.13–26). *Clean his cloak*, literally "delouse," illustrates Jeremiah's low opinion of Egypt. *Heliopolis* (also called On; Gen.41.45), six miles northeast of Cairo; ancient center of the worship of sun-god Re (see Is.19:18 n.). *Obelisks*, monuments, slightly tapered square granite shafts, capped by a pyramidion. **44.1–14:** This oracle, addressed to the Jewish diaspora in Egypt, is an expansion of Jeremiah's warning against repeating the mistakes of their fathers in Judah and suffering the consequences (compare 42.14–18). **1:** *Migdol*, present day Tell el-Heir, east of Tahpanhes (43.7). *Memphis*, 2.16. *Pathros*, "Land of the South," upper (i.e. southern) Egypt, where perhaps there was already by this time a Jewish colony at Elephantine, known from discoveries of Aramaic

woman, infant and child, from the midst of Judah, leaving you no remnant? ⁸ Why do you provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have come to live, that you may be cut off and become a curse and a taunt among all the nations of the earth? ⁹ Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their^w wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁰ They have not humbled themselves even to this day, nor have they feared, nor walked in my law and my statutes which I set before you and before your fathers.

¹¹ "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, to cut off all Judah. ¹² I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to come to the land of Egypt to live, and they shall all be consumed; in the land of Egypt they shall fall; by the sword and by famine they shall be consumed; from the least to the greatest, they shall die by the sword and by famine; and they shall become an execration, a horror, a curse, and a taunt. ¹³ I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, ¹⁴ so that none of the remnant of Judah who have come to live in the land of Egypt shall escape or survive or return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return to dwell there; for they shall not return, except some fugitives."

¹⁵ Then all the men who knew that their wives had offered incense to other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great assembly, all the people who dwelt in Pathros in the land of Egypt, answered Jeremiah: ¹⁶ "As for the word which you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you. ¹⁷ But we will do everything that we have vowed, burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out libations to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no evil. ¹⁸ But since we left off burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out libations to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine." ¹⁹ And the women said,^x "When we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out libations to her, was it without our husbands' approval that we made cakes for her bearing her image and poured out libations to her?"

²⁰ Then Jeremiah said to all the people, men and women, all the people who had given him this answer: ²¹ "As for the incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember it?" Did it not come into his mind? ²² The LORD could no longer bear your evil doings and the abominations which you committed; therefore your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse, without inhabitant, as it is this day. ²³ It is because you burned incense, and because you sinned

^w Heb *his*

^x Compare Syr: Heb lacks *And the women said*

^y Syr: Heb *them*

papyri dating from the fifth century B.C. **15-28:** The refugees return to the worship of the *queen of heaven* (7.16-20), which was the Babylonian-Assyrian goddess Ishtar, goddess of the star Venus (compare the Canaanite Astarte, Greek Aphrodite, Roman Venus). First introduced, presumably, by Manasseh (2 Kg.21.1-18), suppressed by Josiah (2 Kg.23.4-14), and restored by Jehoiakim (2 Kg.23.36-24.7), the cult was especially popular among women, who had an inferior role in the cult of the LORD. Offerings included wine and star-shaped or crescent-shaped cakes or figurines bearing the *image* of the goddess. The cult persisted into the Christian centuries, and features of it were incorporated by the early Syrian church in the adoration of

against the LORD and did not obey the voice of the LORD or walk in his law and in his statutes and in his testimonies, that this evil has befallen you, as at this day."

24 Jeremiah said to all the people and all the women, "Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who are in the land of Egypt, ²⁵ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You and your wives have declared with your mouths, and have fulfilled it with your hands, saying, 'We will surely perform our vows that we have made, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out libations to her.' Then confirm your vows and perform your vows! ²⁶ Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt: Behold, I have sworn by my great name, says the LORD, that my name shall no more be invoked by the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, 'As the Lord GOD lives.' ²⁷ Behold, I am watching over them for evil and not for good; all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end of them. ²⁸ And those who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, few in number; and all the remnant of Judah, who came to the land of Egypt to live, shall know whose word will stand, mine or theirs. ²⁹ This shall be the sign to you, says the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, in order that you may know that my words will surely stand against you for evil: ³⁰ Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life,

as I gave Zedeki'ah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon, who was his enemy and sought his life."

45 The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neri'ah, when he wrote these words in a book at the dictation of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah: ² "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: ³ You said, 'Woe is me! for the LORD has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning, and I find no rest.' ⁴ Thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD: Behold, what I have built I am breaking down, and what I have planted I am plucking up—that is, the whole land. ⁵ And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not; for, behold, I am bringing evil upon all flesh, says the LORD; but I will give you your life as a prize of war in all places to which you may go."

46 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations.

2 About Egypt. Concerning the army of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates at Car'chemish and which Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoi'akim the son of Josi'ah, king of Judah:

³ "Prepare buckler and shield, and advance for battle!

⁴ Harness the horses; mount, O horsemen!

Take your stations with your helmets, polish your spears,

the Virgin. **29–30:** *Hophra* (Apries, 588–569 B.C.; 37.5) was assassinated by Ahmosis II (Amasis, 569–526 B.C.), a former court official, co-regent for three years, and founder of the Twenty-seventh (Libyan) Dynasty. For similar *signs*, see Is.7.11–17; Ex.3.12. **45.1–5:** Advised at the outset of the difficulties ahead (36.1–4; 1.10) and surveying the trying years now past, *Baruch* concludes his memoirs by recalling God's assurance of physical deliverance (39.15–18).

46.1–51.64: *Oracles against foreign nations* (compare Is. chs. 13–23; Ezek. chs. 25–32). **46.1:** Introduction (1.2; 14.1); continues 25.15–38. **2–28:** *Against Egypt*. **2–12:** In May or June 605 B.C. Crown Prince Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon defeated Neco II of Egypt at Car'chemish, on the northern Euphrates, sixty miles west of Haran (Gen. 11.31), the last capital of

- put on your coats of mail!
⁵ Why have I seen it?
 They are dismayed
 and have turned backward.
 Their warriors are beaten down,
 and have fled in haste;
 they look not back—
 terror on every side!
 says the LORD.
⁶ The swift cannot flee away,
 nor the warrior escape;
 in the north by the river Euphra'tes
 they have stumbled and fallen.
⁷ "Who is this, rising like the Nile,
 like rivers whose waters surge?
⁸ Egypt rises like the Nile,
 like rivers whose waters surge.
 He said, I will rise, I will cover the
 earth,
 I will destroy cities and their
 inhabitants.
⁹ Advance, O horses,
 and rage, O chariots!
 Let the warriors go forth:
 men of Ethiopia and Put who
 handle the shield,
 men of Lud, skilled in handling
 the bow.
¹⁰ That day is the day of the Lord God
 of hosts,
 a day of vengeance,
 to avenge himself on his foes.
 The sword shall devour and be
 sated,
 and drink its fill of their blood.
 For the Lord God of hosts holds a
 sacrifice
 in the north country by the river
 Euphra'tes.
¹¹ Go up to Gilead, and take balm,
 O virgin daughter of Egypt!
 In vain you have used many
 medicines;

- there is no healing for you.
¹² The nations have heard of your
 shame,
 and the earth is full of your cry;
 for warrior has stumbled against
 warrior;
 they have both fallen together."
¹³ The word which the LORD spoke
 to Jeremiah the prophet about the
 coming of Nebuchadrez'zar king of
 Babylon to smite the land of Egypt:
¹⁴ "Declare in Egypt, and proclaim in
 Migdol;
 proclaim in Memphis and
 Tah'panhes;
 Say, 'Stand ready and be prepared,
 for the sword shall devour round
 about you.'
¹⁵ Why has Apis fled?^z
 Why did not your bull stand?
 Because the LORD thrust him
 down.
¹⁶ Your multitude stumbled^a and fell,
 and they said one to another,
 'Arise, and let us go back to our own
 people
 and to the land of our birth,
 because of the sword of the
 oppressor.'
¹⁷ Call the name of Pharaoh, king of
 Egypt,
 'Noisy one who lets the hour go
 by.'
¹⁸ "As I live, says the King,
 whose name is the LORD of hosts,
 like Tabor among the mountains,
 and like Carmel by the sea, shall
 one come.
¹⁹ Prepare yourselves baggage for
 exile,

^z Gk: Heb *Why was it swept away*

^a Gk: Heb *He made many stumble*

Assyria, and pursued him to the borders of Egypt. Like the Nile, Egypt was preparing to inundate the lands to the north. Instead she was grievously wounded, driven back, and humiliated before the nations. *Put*, Cyrene. *Lud*, unidentified African country (Ezek.30.5). **13-26:** This oracle may date from one of three occasions: (a) 605 B.C. (see above); (b) November 601, when, according to the Babylonian Chronicle, Nebuchadrezzar and Neco fought to a stalemate at the Egyptian border; (c) 568/567 (see 43.8-13 n.). One of the first two dates is preferable. The poetic section refers to lower Egypt (Memphis); the prose to upper Egypt (Thebes). *Apis*, bull-god of (southern) Egypt (Nah.3.8). *Tabor*, great mountain rising above the plain of Jezreel (Esdraslon; Jos.19.22). *Carmel*, mountain at the end of the plain of Jezreel, projecting into the

O inhabitants of Egypt!
For Memphis shall become a waste,
a ruin, without inhabitant.

²⁰ "A beautiful heifer is Egypt,
but a gadfly from the north has
come upon her.

²¹ Even her hired soldiers in her midst
are like fatted calves;
yea, they have turned and fled
together,
they did not stand;
for the day of their calamity has
come upon them,
the time of their punishment.

²² "She makes a sound like a serpent
gliding away;
for her enemies march in force,
and come against her with axes,
like those who fell trees.

²³ They shall cut down her forest,
says the LORD,
though it is impenetrable,
because they are more numerous
than locusts;
they are without number.

²⁴ The daughter of Egypt shall be put
to shame,
she shall be delivered into the
hand of a people from the
north."

²⁵ The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, said: "Behold, I am bringing punishment upon Amon of Thebes, and Pharaoh, and Egypt and her gods and her kings, upon Pharaoh and those who trust in him. ²⁶ I will deliver them into the hand of those who seek their life, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and his officers. Afterward Egypt shall be inhabited as in the days of old, says the LORD.

²⁷ "But fear not, O Jacob my servant,
nor be dismayed, O Israel;

for lo, I will save you from afar,
and your offspring from the land
of their captivity.

Jacob shall return and have quiet
and ease,
and none shall make him afraid.

²⁸ Fear not, O Jacob my servant,
says the LORD,
for I am with you.

I will make a full end of all the
nations
to which I have driven you,
but of you I will not make a full
end.

I will chasten you in just measure,
and I will by no means leave you
unpunished."

47 The word of the LORD that
came to Jeremiah the prophet
concerning the Philistines, before
Pharaoh smote Gaza.

² "Thus says the LORD:

Behold, waters are rising out of
the north,
and shall become an overflowing
torrent;
they shall overflow the land and all
that fills it,
the city and those who dwell in it.
Men shall cry out,
and every inhabitant of the land
shall wail.

³ At the noise of the stamping of the
hoofs of his stallions,
at the rushing of his chariots, at
the rumbling of their wheels
the fathers look not back to the
children,

so feeble are their hands,
⁴ because of the day that is coming to
destroy
all the Philistines,
to cut off from Tyre and Sidon
every helper that remains.
For the LORD is destroying the
Philistines,

Mediterranean (Jos.19.26). **27-28:** A doublet of 30.10-11, which here contrasts the destruction of Egypt (except 26b) and the reconstruction of all Israel.

47.1-7: Against the Philistines. Dissimilar from other oracles against the Philistines (Is.14.29-31; Ezek.25.15-17), this oracle may be associated with Nebuchadrezzar's sack of Ashkelon (vv. 5,7; 36.9). The Phoenician cities, Tyre and Sidon, were perhaps allied also with the Philistines (27.3). The Philistines were related to the Indo-European inhabitants of Crete (*Caphtor*;

the remnant of the coastland of
Caphtor.

⁵ Baldness has come upon Gaza,
Ash'kelon has perished.
O remnant of the Anakim,^b
how long will you gash yourselves?

⁶ Ah, sword of the LORD!
How long till you are quiet?
Put yourself into your scabbard,
rest and be still!

⁷ How can it^c be quiet,
when the LORD has given it a
charge?
Against Ash'kelon and against the
seashore
he has appointed it."

48 Concerning Moab.
Thus says the LORD of hosts,
the God of Israel:

"Woe to Nebo, for it is laid waste!
Kiriatha'im is put to shame, it is
taken;

the fortress is put to shame and
broken down;

² the renown of Moab is no more.
In Heshbon they planned evil
against her:

'Come, let us cut her off from
being a nation!'

You also, O Madmen, shall be
brought to silence;
the sword shall pursue you.

³ "Hark! a cry from Horona'im,
'Desolation and great destruction!'

⁴ Moab is destroyed;
a cry is heard as far as Zo'ar.^d

⁵ For at the ascent of Luhith
they go up weeping;^e
for at the descent of Horona'im
they have heard the cry^f of
destruction.

⁶ Flee! Save yourselves!
Be like a wild ass^g in the desert!

⁷ For, because you trusted in your
strongholds^h and your
treasures,
you also shall be taken;
and Chemosh shall go forth into
exile,
with his priests and his princes.

⁸ The destroyer shall come upon
every city,
and no city shall escape;
the valley shall perish,
and the plain shall be destroyed,
as the LORD has spoken.

⁹ "Give wings to Moab,
for she would fly away;
her cities shall become a desolation,
with no inhabitant in them.

¹⁰ "Cursed is he who does the work
of the LORD with slackness; and cursed
is he who keeps back his sword from
bloodshed.

¹¹ "Moab has been at ease from his
youth
and has settled on his lees;
he has not been emptied from vessel
to vessel,
nor has he gone into exile;
so his taste remains in him,
and his scent is not changed.

¹² "Therefore, behold, the days are
coming, says the LORD, when I shall
send to him tilters who will tilt him,
and empty his vessels, and break hisⁱ
jars in pieces. ¹³ Then Moab shall be

^b Gk: Heb *their valley* ^c Gk Vg: Heb *you*

^d Gk: Heb *her little ones*

^e Cn: Heb *weeping goes up with weeping*

^f Gk Compare Is 15.5: Heb *the distress of the cry*

^g Gk Aquila: Heb *like Aroer*

^h Gk: Heb *works* ⁱ Gk Aquila: Heb *their*

See Am.9.7 n.; 2 Sam.8.18 n. **5:** *Anakim*, Jos.11.21-22. For similar signs of lamentation, compare 16.6; 41.5.

48.1-47: Against Moab. The original occasion for this dirge may have been the suppression of the revolt of Moab and other western states by Assurbanipal about 650 B.C. The immediate occasion may be either the punitive raids against Judah in 601 (12.7-13) or the inconclusive plot to revolt in 594 (27.1-11)—probably the former. The dirge was apparently popular in Judah (Is.15.1-16.14). **1-10:** The advance of the enemy (perhaps Nebuchadrezzar), against which Moab is defenseless. **7:** For *Chemosh*, chief god of Moab, see Jg.11.24 n. **11-17:** Though Moab was not on the main trade-route or invasion-route, she will not escape; her heroes will quail before the enemy. **13:** Perhaps here *Bethel* is the name of a contemporary god

ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, their confidence.

14 "How do you say, 'We are heroes and mighty men of war'?

15 The destroyer of Moab and his cities has come up, and the choicest of his young men have gone down to slaughter, says the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

16 The calamity of Moab is near at hand and his affliction hastens apace.

17 Bemoan him, all you who are round about him, and all who know his name; say, 'How the mighty scepter is broken, the glorious staff.'

18 "Come down from your glory, and sit on the parched ground, O inhabitant of Dibon! For the destroyer of Moab has come up against you; he has destroyed your strongholds.

19 Stand by the way and watch, O inhabitant of Aro'er! Ask him who flees and her who escapes; say, 'What has happened?'

20 Moab is put to shame, for it is broken; wail and cry! Tell it by the Arnon, that Moab is laid waste.

21 "Judgment has come upon the tableland, upon Holon, and Jahzah, and Meph'a-ath, ²² and Dibon, and Nebo, and Beth-diblatha'im, ²³ and Kiriatha'im, and Beth-ga'mul, and Beth-me'on, ²⁴ and Ker'i-oth, and Bozrah, and all the cities of the land of Moab, far and near. ²⁵ The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, says the LORD.

26 "Make him drunk, because he magnified himself against the LORD; so that Moab shall wallow in his vomit, and he too shall be held in derision. ²⁷ Was not Israel a derision to you? Was he found among thieves, that whenever you spoke of him you wagged your head?

28 "Leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, O inhabitants of Moab! Be like the dove that nests in the sides of the mouth of a gorge.

29 We have heard of the pride of Moab—he is very proud—of his loftiness, his pride, and his arrogance, and the haughtiness of his heart.

30 I know his insolence, says the LORD; his boasts are false, his deeds are false.

31 Therefore I wail for Moab; I cry out for all Moab; for the men of Kir-he'res I mourn.

32 More than for Jazer I weep for you, O vine of Sibmah! Your branches passed over the sea, reached as far as Jazer;^j upon your summer fruits and your vintage the destroyer has fallen.

33 Gladness and joy have been taken away from the fruitful land of Moab; I have made the wine cease from the wine presses; no one treads them with shouts of joy; the shouting is not the shout of joy.

34 "Heshbon and Ele-a'leh cry out;^k as far as Jahaz they utter their voice, from Zo'ar to Horona'im and

^j Cn: Heb the sea of Jazer

^k Cn: Heb From the cry of Heshbon to Elealeh

of Aramaic origin, not the city. 18-28: As Moab had spitefully derided Judah, may she now choke on her own spite! The desert is no safe refuge; as the wild dove (Ezek. 7.16), she must take to the rocks. 29-39: Moab, once so proud, is humiliated before her conqueror. As a

Eg'lath-shelish'iyah. For the waters of Nimrim also have become desolate.

³⁵ And I will bring to an end in Moab, says the LORD, him who offers sacrifice in the high place and burns incense to his god. ³⁶ Therefore my heart moans for Moab like a flute, and my heart moans like a flute for the men of Kir-he're's; therefore the riches they gained have perished.

³⁷ "For every head is shaved and every beard cut off; upon all the hands are gashes, and on the loins is sackcloth. ³⁸ On all the housetops of Moab and in the squares there is nothing but lamentation; for I have broken Moab like a vessel for which no one cares, says the LORD. ³⁹ How it is broken! How they wail! How Moab has turned his back in shame! So Moab has become a derision and a horror to all that are round about him."

⁴⁰ For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, one shall fly swiftly like an eagle,
and spread his wings against Moab;

⁴¹ the cities shall be taken
and the strongholds seized.
The heart of the warriors of Moab
shall be in that day
like the heart of a woman in her pangs;

⁴² Moab shall be destroyed and be no longer a people,
because he magnified himself
against the LORD.

⁴³ Terror, pit, and snare
are before you, O inhabitant of Moab!

says the LORD.

⁴⁴ He who flees from the terror
shall fall into the pit,
and he who climbs out of the pit

shall be caught in the snare.
For I will bring these things¹ upon Moab
in the year of their punishment,
says the LORD.

⁴⁵ "In the shadow of Heshbon fugitives stop without strength; for a fire has gone forth from Heshbon,
a flame from the house of Sihon; it has destroyed the forehead of Moab,
the crown of the sons of tumult.

⁴⁶ Woe to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh is undone;
for your sons have been taken captive,
and your daughters into captivity.

⁴⁷ Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab
in the latter days, says the LORD."
Thus far is the judgment on Moab.

49 Concerning the Ammonites.
Thus says the LORD:

"Has Israel no sons?
Has he no heir?

Why then has Milcom dispossessed Gad,
and his people settled in its cities?

² Therefore, behold, the days are coming,
says the LORD,
when I will cause the battle cry to be heard
against Rabbah of the Ammonites;
it shall become a desolate mound,
and its villages shall be burned with fire;
then Israel shall dispossess those
who dispossessed him,
says the LORD.

¹ Gk Syr: Heb to her

broken pot is discarded, so smitten Moab is accounted worthless. **40-42:** God's judgment against Moab. **43-47:** After thoroughgoing devastation (23.12; Is.24.17-18) Moab will be restored.

49.1-6: Against Ammon. The occasion for this comparatively mild oracle may be the Ammonite raid of 601 B.C. (see 12.7-13 n.). Ammon, the northern "brother" of Moab (Gen.19.30-38), had previously occupied Transjordanian territory claimed by Israel (Jg.10.6-12.6; 2 Kg. 15.29) and was Israelite territory under David (2 Sam.12.26-31; Am.1.13-14 perhaps reflects their war for independence). Ammon too must suffer for its idolatry and violence. *Milcom*, Ammonite national god (1 Kg.11.5,33); *Rabbah*, capital of Ammon.

³ "Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is laid waste!

Cry, O daughters of Rabbah!
Gird yourselves with sackcloth,
lament, and run to and fro among
the hedges!

For Milcom shall go into exile,
with his priests and his princes.

⁴ Why do you boast of your valleys,^m
O faithless daughter,
who trusted in her treasures, saying,
'Who will come against me?'

⁵ Behold, I will bring terror upon you,
says the Lord GOD of hosts,
from all who are round about you,
and you shall be driven out, every
man straight before him,
with none to gather the fugitives.

⁶ But afterward I will restore the
fortunes of the Ammonites, says the
LORD."

⁷ Concerning Edom.

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Is wisdom no more in Teman?
Has counsel perished from the
prudent?
Has their wisdom vanished?

⁸ Flee, turn back, dwell in the
depths,
O inhabitants of Dedan!
For I will bring the calamity of
Esau upon him,
the time when I punish him.

⁹ If grape-gatherers came to you,
would they not leave gleanings?
If thieves came by night,
would they not destroy only
enough for themselves?

¹⁰ But I have stripped Esau bare,
I have uncovered his hiding
places,
and he is not able to conceal
himself.

His children are destroyed, and his
brothers,

and his neighbors; and he is no
more.

¹¹ Leave your fatherless children, I
will keep them alive;
and let your widows trust in me."

¹² For thus says the LORD: "If
those who did not deserve to drink the
cup must drink it, will you go un-
punished? You shall not go un-
punished, but you must drink. ¹³ For
I have sworn by myself, says the
LORD, that Bozrah shall become a
horror, a taunt, a waste, and a curse;
and all her cities shall be perpetual
wastes."

¹⁴ I have heard tidings from the LORD,
and a messenger has been sent
among the nations:

"Gather yourselves together and
come against her,
and rise up for battle!"

¹⁵ For behold, I will make you small
among the nations,
despised among men.

¹⁶ The horror you inspire has deceived
you,
and the pride of your heart,
you who live in the clefts of the
rock,ⁿ
who hold the height of the hill.
Though you make your nest as high
as the eagle's,
I will bring you down from there,
says the LORD.

¹⁷ "Edom shall become a horror;
every one who passes by it will be hor-
rified and will hiss because of all its
disasters. ¹⁸ As when Sodom and
Gomor'rah and their neighbor cities
were overthrown, says the LORD, no
man shall dwell there, no man shall
sojourn in her. ¹⁹ Behold, like a lion
coming up from the jungle of the Jor-
dan against a strong sheepfold, I will

^m Heb valleys, your valley flows
ⁿ Or Sela

49.7-22: Against Edom. After 587 B.C. the relationship between Israel and "brother" Edom (Dt.23.7-8) deteriorated to consistent Jewish vengefulness because of Edom's occupation of southern Judah (Lam.4.21-22; Ezek.25.12-14), an occupation caused by pressure from Arab tribes. Jeremiah and Obadiah (Ob.1-9) share an oracle (which may be original with neither) that describes the bleak future of Edom. For another possible occasion, see vv. 1-6 n. *Teman*, modern Tawilan, about three miles east of Sela (Petra). *Bozrah*, a great fortress city in northern Edom. **19-21:** Editorial revision of 50.44-46.

suddenly make them^o run away from her; and I will appoint over her whom-ever I choose. For who is like me? Who will summon me? What shepherd can stand before me? ²⁰ Therefore hear the plan which the LORD has made against Edom and the purposes which he has formed against the inhabitants of Teman: Even the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away; surely their fold shall be appalled at their fate. ²¹ At the sound of their fall the earth shall tremble; the sound of their cry shall be heard at the Red Sea. ²² Behold, one shall mount up and fly swiftly like an eagle, and spread his wings against Bozrah, and the heart of the warriors of Edom shall be in that day like the heart of a woman in her pangs.”

²³ Concerning Damascus.

“Hamath and Arpad are confounded,
for they have heard evil tidings;
they melt in fear, they are troubled
like the sea^p
which cannot be quiet.

²⁴ Damascus has become feeble, she
turned to flee,
and panic seized her;
anguish and sorrows have taken
hold of her,
as of a woman in travail.

²⁵ How the famous city is forsaken,^q
the joyful city!^r

²⁶ Therefore her young men shall fall
in her squares,
and all her soldiers shall be
destroyed in that day,
says the LORD of hosts.

²⁷ And I will kindle a fire in the wall
of Damascus,
and it shall devour the strongholds
of Ben-ha'dad.”

²⁸ Concerning Kedar and the king-
doms of Hazor which Nebuchadrez'-
zar king of Babylon smote.

Thus says the LORD:

“Rise up, advance against Kedar!

Destroy the people of the east!

²⁹ Their tents and their flocks shall be
taken,
their curtains and all their goods;
their camels shall be borne away
from them,
and men shall cry to them:
‘Terror on every side!’

³⁰ Flee, wander far away, dwell in the
depths,
O inhabitants of Hazor!

says the LORD.

For Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon
has made a plan against you,
and formed a purpose against you.

³¹ “Rise up, advance against a nation
at ease,
that dwells securely,

says the LORD,

that has no gates or bars,
that dwells alone.

³² Their camels shall become booty,
their herds of cattle a spoil.
I will scatter to every wind
those who cut the corners of their
hair,
and I will bring their calamity
from every side of them,

says the LORD.

³³ Hazor shall become a haunt of
jackals,
an everlasting waste;
no man shall dwell there,
no man shall sojourn in her.”

³⁴ The word of the LORD that came
to Jeremiah the prophet concerning

^o Gk Syr: Heb him

^p Cn: Heb there is trouble in the sea

^q Vg: Heb not forsaken

^r Syr Vg Tg: Heb city of my joy

49.23-27: Against Damascus. The occasion for this composite oracle (compare v. 27; Am.1.4) is unidentifiable. Damascus lost its independence with the capture of Arpad by Tiglath-Pileser III in 740 B.C., Hamath in 738, and Damascus in 732 (Is.10.9; 37.13). Ben-hadad, 1 Kg.15.18,20.

49.28-33: Against Kedar and Hazor. In mid-winter 599/598 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar led a successful expedition against the Arab tribes in the desert east of Syria-Palestine, which may have been the occasion for this oracle (9.26; 25.23-24). These people with no fortresses, who lived in the desert expanses, would not escape attack from the wide-ranging Nebuchadrezzar.

Elam, in the beginning of the reign of Zedeki'ah king of Judah.

35 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might; ³⁶ and I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven; and I will scatter them to all those winds, and there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come. ³⁷ I will terrify Elam before their enemies, and before those who seek their life; I will bring evil upon them, my fierce anger, says the LORD. I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them; ³⁸ and I will set my throne in Elam, and destroy their king and princes, says the LORD.

39 "But in the latter days I will restore the fortunes of Elam, says the LORD."

50 The word which the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, concerning the land of the Chalde'ans, by Jeremiah the prophet:

² "Declare among the nations and proclaim,
set up a banner and proclaim,
conceal it not, and say:

'Babylon is taken,
Bel is put to shame,
Mer'odach is dismayed.

Her images are put to shame,
her idols are dismayed.'

3 "For out of the north a nation has come up against her, which shall

make her land a desolation, and none shall dwell in it; both man and beast shall flee away.

4 "In those days and in that time, says the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come; and they shall seek the LORD their God. ⁵ They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, 'Come, let us join ourselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant which will never be forgotten.'

6 "My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains; from mountain to hill they have gone, they have forgotten their fold. ⁷ All who found them have devoured them, and their enemies have said, 'We are not guilty, for they have sinned against the LORD, their true habitation, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.'

8 "Flee from the midst of Babylon, and go out of the land of the Chalde'ans, and be as he-goats before the flock. ⁹ For behold, I am stirring up and bringing against Babylon a company of great nations, from the north country; and they shall array themselves against her; from there she shall be taken. Their arrows are like a skilled warrior who does not return empty-handed. ¹⁰ Chalde'a shall be

49.34-39: Against Elam. In the winter of 596 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar attacked Elam, east of Babylonia, and was apparently successful. *Zedekiah* became king in March 597, when Jehoia-chin was deposed. *Bow of Elam* reflects the prowess of Elamite archers (Is.22.6). **39:** This verse (like 46.26; 48.47; and 49.6) is probably an editorial addition.

50.1-51.64: Against Babylon. This collection of illogically arranged and sometimes reduplicated oracles was probably not composed by Jeremiah, though materials from his oracles were used. It contains two main themes: the fall of Babylon (sometimes represented as accomplished, sometimes represented as still in the future) and the return of the exiles (compare 24.6; 29.10). The attitude toward Babylon is somewhat harsher (50.14,24) than one finds elsewhere in the book (27.6; 43.10), but is not unprecedented (e.g. 25.12-14). The oracles concerning Judah (Israel) are here marked with the letters (a) to (f). **50.1:** *By Jeremiah*, literally "by the hand of Jeremiah," an idiom found also in the superscriptions in Hag.1.1; Mal.1.1; contrast Jer.46.1; 49.34. **2-3:** The downfall of Babylon. The nation *out of the north*, patterned on Jeremiah's expression (4.6), may or may not refer to Cyrus and Persia, before whom Babylon fell in October 539 B.C. *Bel* (Baal), 51.44; Is.46.1, originally chief god of Nippur, later identified in Babylon with the great cosmic god Marduk (*Merodach*). **4-5,6-7:** (a) An apostrophe on Israel's homecoming (31.7-9) and guilt (2.20; 23.1-2). **8-16:** The residents are urged to flee before

plundered; all who plunder her shall be sated, says the LORD.

- 11 "Though you rejoice, though you exult,
O plunderers of my heritage,
though you are wanton as a heifer
at grass,
and neigh like stallions,
12 your mother shall be utterly shamed,
and she who bore you shall be disgraced.

Lo, she shall be the last of the nations,
a wilderness dry and desert.

- 13 Because of the wrath of the LORD she shall not be inhabited,
but shall be an utter desolation;
every one who passes by Babylon
shall be appalled,
and hiss because of all her wounds.

- 14 Set yourselves in array against Babylon round about,
all you that bend the bow;
shoot at her, spare no arrows,
for she has sinned against the LORD.

- 15 Raise a shout against her round about,
she has surrendered;
her bulwarks have fallen,
her walls are thrown down.
For this is the vengeance of the LORD:
take vengeance on her,
do to her as she has done.

- 16 Cut off from Babylon the sower,
and the one who handles the sickle in time of harvest;
because of the sword of the oppressor,
every one shall turn to his own people,

and every one shall flee to his own land.

17 "Israel is a hunted sheep driven away by lions. First the king of Assyria devoured him, and now at last Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon has gnawed his bones. 18 Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing punishment on the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria. 19 I will restore Israel to his pasture, and he shall feed on Carmel and in Bashan, and his desire shall be satisfied on the hills of E'phraim and in Gilead. 20 In those days and in that time, says the LORD, iniquity shall be sought in Israel, and there shall be none; and sin in Judah, and none shall be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.

- 21 "Go up against the land of Meratha'im,^s
and against the inhabitants of Pekod.^t
Slay, and utterly destroy after them,
says the LORD,
and do all that I have commanded you.

22 The noise of battle is in the land,
and great destruction!

23 How the hammer of the whole earth
is cut down and broken!
How Babylon has become
a horror among the nations!

24 I set a snare for you and you were taken, O Babylon,
and you did not know it;
you were found and caught,
because you strove against the LORD.

25 The LORD has opened his armory,

^s Or Double Rebellion

^t Or Punishment

Babylon's approaching doom (13.14) and desolation (18.16). Not only is the city destroyed, but more damaging, in a way, is the destruction of food production. 17-20: (b) Though successively subject to Assyria and Babylonia, Israel will be restored (31.4-5; 33.8) and Babylon, as Assyria earlier, will be destroyed (25.12). 21-32: God's judgment against Babylon. *Mera-thaim*, "Double Rebellion" is a play on the name of southern Babylonia, *mât marrâti*, "Land of the Lagoons." *Pekod*, "Punishment," is a play on the name *Puqûdu*, an east Babylonian tribe (Ezek.23.23). The writer derides Babylon as a smashed hammer and a captured bird (compare 5.26-27). He sees the destruction of the temple as an affront to God which must and will be

and brought out the weapons of
 his wrath,
 for the Lord GOD of hosts has a
 work to do
 in the land of the Chalde'ans.
²⁶ Come against her from every
 quarter;
 open her granaries;
 pile her up like heaps of grain, and
 destroy her utterly;
 let nothing be left of her.
²⁷ Slay all her bulls,
 let them go down to the slaughter.
 Woe to them, for their day has come,
 the time of their punishment.

28 "Hark! they flee and escape
 from the land of Babylon, to declare
 in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our
 God, vengeance for his temple.

29 "Summon archers against Baby-
 lon, all those who bend the bow. En-
 camp round about her; let no one es-
 cape. Requite her according to her
 deeds, do to her according to all that
 she has done; for she has proudly de-
 fied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.
³⁰ Therefore her young men shall fall
 in her squares, and all her soldiers
 shall be destroyed on that day, says
 the LORD.

³¹ "Behold, I am against you, O proud
 one,
 says the Lord GOD of hosts;
 for your day has come,
 the time when I will punish you.
³² The proud one shall stumble and
 fall,
 with none to raise him up,
 and I will kindle a fire in his cities,
 and it will devour all that is round
 about him.

33 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:
 The people of Israel are oppressed,

and the people of Judah with them;
 all who took them captive have held
 them fast, they refuse to let them go.
³⁴ Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD
 of hosts is his name. He will surely
 plead their cause, that he may give rest
 to the earth, but unrest to the inhabit-
 ants of Babylon.

³⁵ "A sword upon the Chalde'ans,
 says the LORD,
 and upon the inhabitants of
 Babylon,
 and upon her princes and her wise
 men!

³⁶ A sword upon the diviners,
 that they may become fools!
 A sword upon her warriors,
 that they may be destroyed!

³⁷ A sword upon her horses and upon
 her chariots,
 and upon all the foreign troops
 in her midst,
 that they may become women!
 A sword upon all her treasures,
 that they may be plundered!

³⁸ A drought upon her waters,
 that they may be dried up!
 For it is a land of images,
 and they are mad over idols.

39 "Therefore wild beasts shall
 dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and
 ostriches shall dwell in her; she shall
 be peopled no more for ever, nor in-
 habited for all generations. ⁴⁰ As when
 God overthrew Sodom and Gomor'rah
 and their neighbor cities, says the
 LORD, so no man shall dwell there, and
 no son of man shall sojourn in her.

⁴¹ "Behold, a people comes from the
 north;
 a mighty nation and many kings
 are stirring from the farthest parts
 of the earth.

⁴² They lay hold of bow and spear;

avenged (21.14; Am.2.2). **33-34:** (c) While Israel is helpless, God, her *Redeemer* (Is.47.4), will deliver her and discomfit her oppressors. **35-37:** The oracle of the sword. **38-40:** Babylon will lie as a desert, unproductive, and inhabited only by wild animals (Is. 34.13-14). **41-46:** Babylon, once the foe from the north (6.22-24), now stands in dread anticipation of a foe from the north. As Edom could not escape her punishment (49.19-21), neither can Babylon. There is no king (*shepherd*) who can successfully defy God.

they are cruel, and have no mercy.
The sound of them is like the
roaring of the sea;
they ride upon horses,
arrayed as a man for battle
against you, O daughter of
Babylon!

⁴³ "The king of Babylon heard the
report of them,
and his hands fell helpless;
anguish seized him,
pain as of a woman in travail.

⁴⁴ "Behold, like a lion coming up
from the jungle of the Jordan against a
strong sheepfold, I will suddenly make
them run away from her; and I will
appoint over her whomever I choose.
For who is like me? Who will summon
me? What shepherd can stand be-
fore me? ⁴⁵ Therefore hear the plan
which the LORD has made against
Babylon, and the purposes which he
has formed against the land of the
Chalde'ans: Surely the little ones of
their flock shall be dragged away;
surely their fold shall be appalled at
their fate. ⁴⁶ At the sound of the
capture of Babylon the earth shall
tremble, and her cry shall be heard
among the nations."

51 Thus says the LORD:
"Behold, I will stir up the spirit
of a destroyer
against Babylon,
against the inhabitants of
Chalde'a;"

² and I will send to Babylon
winnowers,
and they shall winnow her,
and they shall empty her land,
when they come against her from
every side
on the day of trouble.

³ Let not the archer bend his bow,

and let him not stand up in his
coat of mail.

Spare not her young men;
utterly destroy all her host.

⁴ They shall fall down slain in the
land of the Chalde'ans,
and wounded in her streets.

⁵ For Israel and Judah have not
been forsaken
by their God, the LORD of hosts;
but the land of the Chalde'ans" is
full of guilt
against the Holy One of Israel.

⁶ "Flee from the midst of Babylon,
let every man save his life!
Be not cut off in her punishment,
for this is the time of the LORD's
vengeance,

the requital he is rendering her.

⁷ Babylon was a golden cup in the
LORD's hand,
making all the earth drunken;
the nations drank of her wine,
therefore the nations went mad.

⁸ Suddenly Babylon has fallen and
been broken;
wail for her!

Take balm for her pain;
perhaps she may be healed.

⁹ We would have healed Babylon,
but she was not healed.

Forsake her, and let us go
each to his own country;
for her judgment has reached up to
heaven
and has been lifted up even to the
skies.

¹⁰ The LORD has brought forth our
vindication;
come, let us declare in Zion
the work of the LORD our God.

¹¹ "Sharpen the arrows!
Take up the shields!

u Heb *Leb-qamai*, a cipher for Chaldea
v Heb *their land*

51.1-19: God's judgment against Babylon. 1-4: As grain is winnowed, so will Babylon be cut down and winnowed (see 15.7 n.). *Chaldea* is written in the Hebrew text as "*Leb-qamai*," an atbash cipher (see 25.26 n.). 5-10: (d) A note reminding Israel that while they have hope, Babylon's case is hopeless (50.33-34). Babylon was the golden cup from which the nations would drink of God's wrath (see 25.15-29 n.), but now that cup is smashed; she stands desolate (46.11; Ezek.27.27) as God delivers his people. 11-19: Terse military commands precede the

The LORD has stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, because his purpose concerning Babylon is to destroy it, for that is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance for his temple.

¹² Set up a standard against the walls of Babylon;
make the watch strong;
set up watchmen;
prepare the ambushes;
for the LORD has both planned and done
what he spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon.

¹³ O you who dwell by many waters, rich in treasures,
your end has come,
the thread of your life is cut.

¹⁴ The LORD of hosts has sworn by himself:
Surely I will fill you with men, as many as locusts,
and they shall raise the shout of victory over you.

¹⁵ "It is he who made the earth by his power,
who established the world by his wisdom,
and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.

¹⁶ When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens,
and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth.

He makes lightnings for the rain,
and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses.

¹⁷ Every man is stupid and without knowledge;
every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols;
for his images are false,
and there is no breath in them.

¹⁸ They are worthless, a work of delusion;
at the time of their punishment they shall perish.

¹⁹ Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob,
for he is the one who formed all things,
and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance;
the LORD of hosts is his name.

²⁰ "You are my hammer and weapon of war:

with you I break nations in pieces;
with you I destroy kingdoms;

²¹ with you I break in pieces the horse and his rider;

with you I break in pieces the chariot and the charioteer;

²² with you I break in pieces man and woman;

with you I break in pieces the old man and the youth;

with you I break in pieces the young man and the maiden;

²³ with you I break in pieces the shepherd and his flock;

with you I break in pieces the farmer and his team;

with you I break in pieces governors and commanders.

²⁴ "I will requite Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea before your very eyes for all the evil that they have done in Zion, says the LORD.

²⁵ "Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain,

says the LORD,

which destroys the whole earth;

I will stretch out my hand against you,

and roll you down from the crags,

attack by the *Medes*; either a reference to Media which, lying northeast of Babylonia, participated in the overthrow of Assyria and was a threat to Babylonia during this period, or an oblique reference to Persia. The phrase *many waters* refers to the Euphrates and the network of canals around Babylon. In connection with God's judgment on Babylon, the writer appends the oracle against the idols from 10.12-16 (50.38). **20-23**: This oracle of the hammer describes Babylon as God's punitive instrument (27.6; 50.23). **24-26**: As did Assyria (Is.10.5,15), so too Babylon will fall. *Destroying mountain* may reflect the great ziggurat or temple tower of Babylon, thrusting its shrine into the heavens, and here symbolizing Babylon itself. *Burnt mountain*,

- and make you a burnt mountain.
- ²⁶ No stone shall be taken from you
for a corner
and no stone for a foundation,
but you shall be a perpetual waste,
says the LORD.
- ²⁷ "Set up a standard on the earth,
blow the trumpet among the
nations;
prepare the nations for war against
her,
summon against her the
kingdoms,
Ar'arat, Minni, and Ash'kenaz;
appoint a marshal against her,
bring up horses like bristling
locusts.
- ²⁸ Prepare the nations for war against
her,
the kings of the Medes, with their
governors and deputies,
and every land under their
dominion.
- ²⁹ The land trembles and writhes in
pain,
for the LORD's purposes against
Babylon stand,
to make the land of Babylon a
desolation,
without inhabitant.
- ³⁰ The warriors of Babylon have
ceased fighting,
they remain in their strongholds;
their strength has failed,
they have become women;
her dwellings are on fire,
her bars are broken.
- ³¹ One runner runs to meet another,
and one messenger to meet
another,
to tell the king of Babylon
that his city is taken on every
side;
- ³² the fords have been seized,
the bulwarks are burned with fire,
and the soldiers are in panic.
- ³³ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel:
The daughter of Babylon is like a
threshing floor
at the time when it is trodden;
yet a little while
and the time of her harvest will
come."
- ³⁴ "Nebuchadrez'zar the king
of Babylon has devoured me,
he has crushed me;
he has made me an empty vessel,
he has swallowed me like a
monster;
he has filled his belly with my
delicacies,
he has rinsed me out.
- ³⁵ The violence done to me and to my
kinsmen be upon Babylon,"
let the inhabitant of Zion say.
"My blood be upon the inhabitants
of Chalde'a,"
let Jerusalem say.
- ³⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD:
"Behold, I will plead your cause
and take vengeance for you.
I will dry up her sea
and make her fountain dry;
- ³⁷ and Babylon shall become a heap
of ruins,
the haunt of jackals,
a horror and a hissing,
without inhabitant.
- ³⁸ "They shall roar together like lions;
they shall growl like lions' whelps.
- ³⁹ While they are inflamed I will
prepare them a feast
and make them drunk, till they
swoon away"
and sleep a perpetual sleep
and not wake, says the LORD.
- ⁴⁰ I will bring them down like lambs
to the slaughter,
like rams and he-goats.

^w Gk Vg: Heb rejoice

nothing useful remains (Is.33.12). **27-33:** As Babylon subdued the nations (25.15-26) so the nations will gather against Babylon. *Ararat*, ancient Urartu, modern Armenia, north of Lake Van. *Minni*, Mannaeans living south of Lake Urmia. *Ashkenaz*, the Scythians—all defeated by the Medes in the early sixth century. Desolate Babylon (4.6-7) is as barren as a threshing floor thoroughly cleaned before the harvest. **34-40:** (e) Again Jerusalem's deliverance is viewed as a mighty act of God (50.34); he will make Babylonia a desert (9.10); the once mighty lion will

- 41 "How Babylon^x is taken,
the praise of the whole earth
seized!
How Babylon has become
a horror among the nations!
42 The sea has come up on Babylon;
she is covered with its tumultuous
waves.
43 Her cities have become a horror,
a land of drought and a desert,
a land in which no one dwells,
and through which no son of man
passes.
44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon,
and take out of his mouth what
he has swallowed.
The nations shall no longer flow to
him;
the wall of Babylon has fallen.
- 45 "Go out of the midst of her, my
people!
Let every man save his life
from the fierce anger of the LORD!
46 Let not your heart faint, and be not
fearful
at the report heard in the land,
when a report comes in one year
and afterward a report in another
year,
and violence is in the land,
and ruler is against ruler.
- 47 "Therefore, behold, the days are
coming
when I will punish the images of
Babylon;
her whole land shall be put to shame,
and all her slain shall fall in the
midst of her.
48 Then the heavens and the earth,
and all that is in them,
shall sing for joy over Babylon;
for the destroyers shall come
against them out of the north,
says the LORD.
- 49 Babylon must fall for the slain of
Israel,
as for Babylon have fallen the
slain of all the earth.
- 50 "You that have escaped from the
sword,
go, stand not still!
Remember the LORD from afar,
and let Jerusalem come into your
mind:
51 'We are put to shame, for we have
heard reproach;
dishonor has covered our face,
for aliens have come
into the holy places of the LORD's
house.'
- 52 "Therefore, behold, the days are
coming, says the LORD,
when I will execute judgment
upon her images,
and through all her land
the wounded shall groan.
53 Though Babylon should mount up
to heaven,
and though she should fortify her
strong height,
yet destroyers would come from me
upon her,
says the LORD.
- 54 "Hark! a cry from Babylon!
The noise of great destruction
from the land of the
Chalde'ans!
55 For the LORD is laying Babylon
waste,
and stilling her mighty voice.
Their waves roar like many waters,
the noise of their voice is raised;
56 for a destroyer has come upon her,
upon Babylon;
her warriors are taken,
their bows are broken in pieces;
for the LORD is a God of recompense,

^x Heb *Sheshach*, a cipher for Babylon

become drunk (25.15-16) and fall into a helpless, permanent sleep. 41-43: Babylon (written "Sheshach," an atbash cipher; see 25.26 n.), will be inundated by the waves of her attackers (46.7-8; Is.8.7-8); when the flood recedes, she will be a trackless wasteland. 44-49: In antiquity, the fall of a land was viewed as the defeat of its god(s) (Is.37.12). 50-58: (f) The doubts raised by the destruction of the temple (a problem which Ezekiel also considers) should be allayed by God's assurance of certain punishment for Babylon which desecrated the holy places. This

he will surely requite.

⁵⁷ I will make drunk her princes and
her wise men,
her governors, her commanders,
and her warriors;
they shall sleep a perpetual sleep
and not wake,
says the King, whose name is the
LORD of hosts.

⁵⁸ "Thus says the LORD of hosts:
The broad wall of Babylon
shall be leveled to the ground
and her high gates
shall be burned with fire.
The peoples labor for nought,
and the nations weary
themselves only for fire."

⁵⁹ The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraî'ah the son of Neri'ah, son of Mahsei'ah, when he went with Zedeki'ah king of Judah to Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign. Seraî'ah was the quartermaster. ⁶⁰ Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, all these words that are written concerning Babylon. ⁶¹ And Jeremiah said to Seraî'ah: "When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, ⁶² and say, 'O LORD, thou hast said concerning this place that thou wilt cut it off, so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate for ever.' ⁶³ When you finish reading this book, bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, ⁶⁴ and say, 'Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because

of the evil that I am bringing upon her.'"

Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

52 Zedeki'ah was twenty-one years old when he became king; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamu'tal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ² And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoi'akim had done. ³ Surely because of the anger of the LORD things came to such a pass in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence.

And Zedeki'ah rebelled against the king of Babylon. ⁴ And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem, and they laid siege to it and built siege-works against it round about. ⁵ So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedeki'ah. ⁶ On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city, that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁷ Then a breach was made in the city; and all the men of war fled and went out from the city by night by the way of a gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, while the Chalde'ans were round about the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah. ⁸ But the army of the Chalde'ans pursued the king, and overtook Zedeki'ah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was

y Gk: Heb upon her. And they shall weary themselves

section is largely a composite of other verses in this collection of oracles. **59-64:** The oracles are written in a book and taken to Babylon. Though we know of no journey of Zedekiah, he may have gone to renew his fealty after the abortive plot of 594 B.C. (chs. 27-28) became known to Nebuchadrezzar. *Seraiah*, brother of Baruch (32.12). **63:** By a symbolic act the oracle against Babylon is emphasized; this oracle may have been the causative factor for the composition of 50.1-51.58. Though for a time God endowed Babylon with great power, he did so that it might accomplish his purposes, not that it should be established as a great power forever.

52.1-34: Historical appendix. Though largely a duplicate of 2 Kg.24.18-25.30, this historical section, together with 39.1-10 and 40.7-43.7, provides much important complementary information (for similar historical additions, see Is. chs. 36-39). **1-3:** Reign of Zedekiah (2 Kg.24.18-20; 597-587 B.C.). For details on the contemporary religious situation, see Ezek. ch. 8. **4-27:** Siege and fall of Jerusalem (39.1-10; 2 Kg.24.20b-25.26). **4-11:** January 588 B.C. to August 587. The last scene enacted before Zedekiah, the rebellious vassal (37.1; Ezek.17.18-21), at Nebu-

scattered from him.⁹ Then they captured the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence upon him.¹⁰ The king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedeki'ah before his eyes, and also slew all the princes of Judah at Riblah.¹¹ He put out the eyes of Zedeki'ah, and bound him in fetters, and the king of Babylon took him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

12 In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon—Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the bodyguard who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem.¹³ And he burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.¹⁴ And all the army of the Chalde'ans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down all the walls round about Jerusalem.¹⁵ And Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard carried away captive some of the poorest of the people and the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the artisans.¹⁶ But Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vine-dressers and plowmen.

17 And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chalde'ans broke in pieces, and carried all the bronze to Babylon.¹⁸ And they took away the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the dishes for incense, and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service;¹⁹ also the small bowls, and the fire-pans, and the basins, and the pots, and

the lampstands, and the dishes for incense, and the bowls for libation. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver.²⁰ As for the two pillars, the one sea, the twelve bronze bulls which were under the sea,^z and the stands, which Solomon the king had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these things was beyond weight.²¹ As for the pillars, the height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, its circumference was twelve cubits, and its thickness was four fingers, and it was hollow.²² Upon it was a capital of bronze; the height of the one capital was five cubits; a network and pomegranates, all of bronze, were upon the capital round about. And the second pillar had the like, with pomegranates.²³ There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; all the pomegranates were a hundred upon the network round about.

24 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the threshold;²⁵ and from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the men of war, and seven men of the king's council, who were found in the city; and the secretary of the commander of the army who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land, who were found in the midst of the city.²⁶ And Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.²⁷ And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried captive out of its land.

28 This is the number of the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried

^z Heb lacks the sea

chadrezzar's headquarters at Riblah (in the central valley northeast of Byblos) was the slaughter of his sons and court officials. Then he was blinded and taken to Babylon to die in prison. 12-16: August 587 B.C. The reasons for the actions of Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadrezzar's field general, are unknown. 17-23: A detailed description of the booty taken from the temple. 24-27: 2 Kg.25.18-21. Seraiah, perhaps the same as in 36.26; otherwise unknown. Zephaniah, 21.1; 29.29. 28-30: The three deportations listed here coincide with the surrender of Jehoiachin

away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; ²⁹ in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrez'zar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; ³⁰ in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadrez'zar, Nebu'zarad'an the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons; all the persons were four thousand and six hundred.

31 And in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoi'achin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the

twenty-fifth day of the month, E'vilmer'odach king of Babylon, in the year that he became king, lifted up the head of Jehoi'achin king of Judah and brought him out of prison; ³² and he spoke kindly to him, and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. ³³ So Jehoi'achin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table; ³⁴ as for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king according to his daily need, until the day of his death as long as he lived.

(597 B.C.; 2 Kg.24.12-16), the suppression of Zedekiah's revolt (587 B.C.), and the reprisals for Gedaliah's assassination (582 B.C.; 40.7-41.18; 2 Kg.25.22-26). 31-34: 2 Kg.25.27-30. The presence of this material proves that the editing of Jeremiah's material was later than 560 B.C. Jehoiachin's restoration may well have been viewed by his contemporaries as the beginning of Judah's restoration (23.5-6).

THE LAMENTATIONS

OF JEREMIAH

Lamentations is a series of poems mourning over the desolation of Jerusalem and the sufferings of her people, following the siege and destruction of the city and the burning of the temple by the Babylonians in 587(586) B.C. The poems have been ascribed traditionally to the prophet Jeremiah (2 Chr.35.25), but their thought and diction are sufficiently different from his to make this improbable. The first four chapters are alphabetic acrostics (with a stanza for each of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet), and the fifth has the same number of verses as the alphabet. All were composed or adapted for public recitation on days of fasting and mourning (Jl.2.15-17; Zech.7.2-3), notably that of the ninth of Ab (August), which commemorated the disaster of 587(586).

Chapters 1, 2, and 4 are in form dirges over the dead city. The elegy's limping 3:2 meter (three beats followed by two beats) is recognizable even in translation, together with the exclamatory "How . . ." in the opening line as an expression of grief (2 Sam.1.25, 27; Is.1.21). In ch. 3 the sadness of the desolate people and reflection upon the meaning of the disaster are voiced by an individual. Chapter 5 in its form and language recalls the liturgies for use in time of national trouble, such as Pss. 74 and 79. The common theme of all the poems is the agony of the people, the apparent desertion of Zion by her God, and the hope that God will yet restore a humbled and repentant Israel.

The book of Lamentations is the work chiefly of one author but with the assistance of others speaking out of the poignant situation in Jerusalem shortly after 587(586) B.C.

HOW LONELY SITS THE CITY
that was full of people!
How like a widow has she become,
she that was great among the
nations!

She that was a princess among the
cities
has become a vassal.

² She weeps bitterly in the night,
tears on her cheeks;
among all her lovers
she has none to comfort her;
all her friends have dealt
treacherously with her,
they have become her enemies.

³ Judah has gone into exile because
of affliction
and hard servitude;
she dwells now among the nations,
but finds no resting place;
her pursuers have all overtaken her
in the midst of her distress.

⁴ The roads to Zion mourn,
for none come to the appointed
feasts;

all her gates are desolate,
her priests groan;
her maidens have been dragged
away,^a
and she herself suffers bitterly.

⁵ Her foes have become the head,
her enemies prosper,
because the LORD has made her
suffer
for the multitude of her
transgressions;
her children have gone away,
captives before the foe.

⁶ From the daughter of Zion has
departed
all her majesty.
Her princes have become like harts
that find no pasture;
they fled without strength
before the pursuer.

⁷ Jerusalem remembers
in the days of her affliction and
bitterness^b

^a Gk Old Latin: Heb afflicted

^b Cn: Heb wandering

- all the precious things
that were hers from days of old.
When her people fell into the hand
of the foe,
and there was none to help her,
the foe gloated over her,
mocking at her downfall.
- ⁸ Jerusalem sinned grievously,
therefore she became filthy;
all who honored her despise her,
for they have seen her nakedness;
yea, she herself groans,
and turns her face away.
- ⁹ Her uncleanness was in her skirts;
she took no thought of her doom;
therefore her fall is terrible,
she has no comforter.
"O LORD, behold my affliction,
for the enemy has triumphed!"
- ¹⁰ The enemy has stretched out his
hands
over all her precious things;
yea, she has seen the nations
invade her sanctuary,
those whom thou didst forbid
to enter thy congregation.
- ¹¹ All her people groan
as they search for bread;
they trade their treasures for food
to revive their strength.
"Look, O LORD, and behold,
for I am despised."
- ¹² "Is it nothing to you,^c all you who
pass by?
Look and see
if there is any sorrow like my sorrow
which was brought upon me,
which the LORD inflicted
on the day of his fierce anger.
- ¹³ "From on high he sent fire;
into my bones^d he made it
descend;
he spread a net for my feet;
he turned me back;
he has left me stunned,
faint all the day long.
- ¹⁴ "My transgressions were bound^e
into a yoke;
by his hand they were fastened
together;
they were set upon my neck;
he caused my strength to fail;
the Lord gave me into the hands
of those whom I cannot
withstand.
- ¹⁵ "The Lord flouted all my mighty
men
in the midst of me;
he summoned an assembly against
me
to crush my young men;
the Lord has trodden as in a wine
press
the virgin daughter of Judah.
- ¹⁶ "For these things I weep;
my eyes flow with tears;
for a comforter is far from me,
one to revive my courage;
my children are desolate,
for the enemy has prevailed."
- ¹⁷ Zion stretches out her hands,
but there is none to comfort her;
the LORD has commanded against
Jacob
that his neighbors should be his
foes;
Jerusalem has become
a filthy thing among them.
- ¹⁸ "The LORD is in the right,
for I have rebelled against his
word;
but hear, all you peoples,
and behold my suffering;
my maidens and my young men
have gone into captivity.
- ¹⁹ "I called to my lovers
but they deceived me;
my priests and elders
perished in the city,

^c Heb uncertain ^d Gk: Heb bones and
^e Cn: Heb uncertain

personified as a maiden. ⁸: *Filthy*, or "a mockery." ¹²: The rendering, *is it nothing to you?* is doubtful; the sentence is probably an idiomatic exclamation of entreaty, "O that you . . . !" or "would that I were as you!" (see v. 17).

while they sought food
to revive their strength.

²⁰ "Behold, O LORD, for I am in
distress,
my soul is in tumult,
my heart is wrung within me,
because I have been very
rebellious.

In the street the sword bereaves;
in the house it is like death.

²¹ "Hear^f how I groan;
there is none to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my
trouble;
they are glad that thou hast done
it.

Bring thou^g the day thou hast
announced,
and let them be as I am.

²² "Let all their evil-doing come
before thee;
and deal with them
as thou hast dealt with me
because of all my transgressions;
for my groans are many
and my heart is faint."

Q How the Lord in his anger
has set the daughter of Zion
under a cloud!

He has cast down from heaven to
earth

the splendor of Israel;
he has not remembered his
footstool
in the day of his anger.

² The Lord has destroyed without
mercy
all the habitations of Jacob;
in his wrath he has broken down
the strongholds of the daughter
of Judah;
he has brought down to the ground
in dishonor
the kingdom and its rulers.

³ He has cut down in fierce anger
all the might of Israel;
he has withdrawn from them his
right hand
in the face of the enemy;
he has burned like a flaming fire in
Jacob,
consuming all around.

⁴ He has bent his bow like an enemy,
with his right hand set like a foe;
and he has slain all the pride of our
eyes
in the tent of the daughter of Zion;
he has poured out his fury like fire.

⁵ The Lord has become like an
enemy,
he has destroyed Israel;
he has destroyed all its palaces,
laid in ruins its strongholds;
and he has multiplied in the
daughter of Judah
mourning and lamentation.

⁶ He has broken down his booth like
that of a garden,
laid in ruins the place of his
appointed feasts;
the LORD has brought to an end in
Zion
appointed feast and sabbath,
and in his fierce indignation has
spurned
king and priest.

⁷ The Lord has scorned his altar,
disowned his sanctuary;
he has delivered into the hand of the
enemy
the walls of her palaces;
a clamor was raised in the house of
the LORD
as on the day of an appointed
feast.

⁸ The LORD determined to lay in
ruins

^f Gk Syr: Heb they heard
^g Syr: Heb thou hast brought

2.1-22: The people's agony and their cry for God to show mercy. 6: *Booth*, the temple is like a broken-down field-shelter. 7: *Clamor* of battle, in place of the shout of acclamation in worship. 8: *Line* of a plummet (Am.7.7-8).

- the wall of the daughter of Zion;
 he marked it off by the line;
 he restrained not his hand from
 destroying;
 he caused rampart and wall to
 lament,
 they languish together.
- ⁹ Her gates have sunk into the
 ground;
 he has ruined and broken her
 bars;
 her king and princes are among the
 nations;
 the law is no more,
 and her prophets obtain
 no vision from the LORD.
- ¹⁰ The elders of the daughter of Zion
 sit on the ground in silence;
 they have cast dust on their heads
 and put on sackcloth;
 the maidens of Jerusalem
 have bowed their heads to the
 ground.
- ¹¹ My eyes are spent with weeping;
 my soul is in tumult;
 my heart is poured out in grief^h
 because of the destruction of the
 daughter of my people,
 because infants and babes faint
 in the streets of the city.
- ¹² They cry to their mothers,
 "Where is bread and wine?"
 as they faint like wounded men
 in the streets of the city,
 as their life is poured out
 on their mothers' bosom.
- ¹³ What can I say for you, to what
 compare you,
 O daughter of Jerusalem?
 What can I liken to you, that I may
 comfort you,
 O virgin daughter of Zion?
 For vast as the sea is your ruin;
 who can restore you?
- ¹⁴ Your prophets have seen for you
 false and deceptive visions;
 they have not exposed your iniquity
 to restore your fortunes,
 but have seen for you oracles
 false and misleading.
- ¹⁵ All who pass along the way
 clap their hands at you;
 they hiss and wag their heads
 at the daughter of Jerusalem;
 "Is this the city which was called
 the perfection of beauty,
 the joy of all the earth?"
- ¹⁶ All your enemies
 rail against you;
 they hiss, they gnash their teeth,
 they cry: "We have destroyed her!
 Ah, this is the day we longed for;
 now we have it; we see it!"
- ¹⁷ The LORD has done what he
 purposed,
 has carried out his threat;
 as he ordained long ago,
 he has demolished without pity;
 he has made the enemy rejoice over
 you,
 and exalted the might of your foes.
- ¹⁸ Cry aloudⁱ to the Lord!
 O^j daughter of Zion!
 Let tears stream down like a torrent
 day and night!
 Give yourself no rest,
 your eyes no respite!
- ¹⁹ Arise, cry out in the night,
 at the beginning of the watches!
 Pour out your heart like water
 before the presence of the Lord!
 Lift your hands to him
 for the lives of your children,
 who faint for hunger
 at the head of every street.
- ^h Heb to the ground
ⁱ Cn: Heb Their heart cried
^j Cn: Heb O wall of

⁹: The law of the priests (Jer.18.18). ¹⁴: Deceptive visions of victory (Jer.23.25-27). ¹⁵: Clap their hands in derision. ¹⁷: His threat to punish disobedience (see 1 Kg.9.6-9). ²⁰: 2 Kg.6.28-29. ²²: Am.5.18-20.

²⁰ Look, O LORD, and see!
With whom hast thou dealt thus?
Should women eat their offspring,
the children of their tender care?
Should priest and prophet be slain
in the sanctuary of the Lord?

²¹ In the dust of the streets
lie the young and the old;
my maidens and my young men
have fallen by the sword;
in the day of thy anger thou hast
slain them,
slaughtering without mercy.

²² Thou didst invite as to the day of
an appointed feast
my terrors on every side;
and on the day of the anger of the
LORD
none escaped or survived;
those whom I dandled and reared
my enemy destroyed.

3 I am the man who has seen
affliction
under the rod of his wrath;
² he has driven and brought me
into darkness without any light;
³ surely against me he turns his hand
again and again the whole day
long.

⁴ He has made my flesh and my skin
waste away,
and broken my bones;

⁵ he has besieged and enveloped me
with bitterness and tribulation;

⁶ he has made me dwell in darkness
like the dead of long ago.

⁷ He has walled me about so that I
cannot escape;
he has put heavy chains on me;

⁸ though I call and cry for help,
he shuts out my prayer;

⁹ he has blocked my ways with hewn
stones,
he has made my paths crooked.

¹⁰ He is to me like a bear lying in wait,
like a lion in hiding;

¹¹ he led me off my way and tore me
to pieces;

he has made me desolate;

¹² he bent his bow and set me
as a mark for his arrow.

¹³ He drove into my heart
the arrows of his quiver;

¹⁴ I have become the laughingstock of
all peoples,
the burden of their songs all day
long.

¹⁵ He has filled me with bitterness,
he has sated me with wormwood.

¹⁶ He has made my teeth grind on
gravel,
and made me cower in ashes;

¹⁷ my soul is bereft of peace,
I have forgotten what happiness is;

¹⁸ so I say, "Gone is my glory,
and my expectation from the
LORD."

¹⁹ Remember my affliction and my
bitterness,^k
the wormwood and the gall!

²⁰ My soul continually thinks of it
and is bowed down within me.

²¹ But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:

²² The steadfast love of the LORD never
ceases,^l

his mercies never come to an end;

²³ they are new every morning;
great is thy faithfulness.

²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my
soul,

^k Cn: Heb wandering

^l Syr Tg: Heb we are not cut off

3.1-66: An acrostic in three parts, with three verses to each letter of the alphabet. **1-24:** A psalm of personal distress and trust in God (compare Ps. 56). The distress is expressed in terms recalling Job's complaints against God; v. 1, compare Job 9.34; v. 2, compare Job 19.8; v. 3, compare Job 7.18; v. 4, compare Job 7.5; 30.30; v. 5, compare Job 19.6,12; v. 6, compare Job 23.16-17; v. 7, compare Job 19.8; v. 8, compare Job 30.20; v. 9, compare Job 19.8; vv. 10-11, compare Job 16.9; vv. 12-13, compare Job 16.12-13; v. 14, compare Job 30.9; v. 15, compare Job 9.18; vv. 16-18, compare Job 19.10; 30.19.

"therefore I will hope in him."

- ²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait
for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
²⁶ It is good that one should wait
quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.
²⁷ It is good for a man that he bear
the yoke in his youth.

²⁸ Let him sit alone in silence
when he has laid it on him;
²⁹ let him put his mouth in the dust—
there may yet be hope;
³⁰ let him give his cheek to the smiter,
and be filled with insults.

³¹ For the Lord will not
cast off for ever,
³² but, though he cause grief, he will
have compassion
according to the abundance of
his steadfast love;
³³ for he does not willingly afflict
or grieve the sons of men.

³⁴ To crush under foot
all the prisoners of the earth,
³⁵ to turn aside the right of a man
in the presence of the Most High,
³⁶ to subvert a man in his cause,
the Lord does not approve.

³⁷ Who has commanded and it came
to pass,
unless the Lord has ordained it?
³⁸ Is it not from the mouth of the Most
High
that good and evil come?
³⁹ Why should a living man complain,
a man, about the punishment of
his sins?

⁴⁰ Let us test and examine our ways,
and return to the LORD!
⁴¹ Let us lift up our hearts and hands

to God in heaven:

- ⁴² "We have transgressed and rebelled,
and thou hast not forgiven.

⁴³ "Thou hast wrapped thyself with
anger and pursued us,
slaying without pity;
⁴⁴ thou hast wrapped thyself with a
cloud
so that no prayer can pass through.
⁴⁵ Thou hast made us offscouring
and refuse
among the peoples.

⁴⁶ "All our enemies
rail against us;
⁴⁷ panic and pitfall have come upon us,
devastation and destruction;
⁴⁸ my eyes flow with rivers of tears
because of the destruction of the
daughter of my people.

⁴⁹ "My eyes will flow without ceasing,
without respite,
⁵⁰ until the LORD from heaven
looks down and sees;
⁵¹ my eyes cause me grief
at the fate of all the maidens of
my city.

⁵² "I have been hunted like a bird
by those who were my enemies
without cause;
⁵³ they flung me alive into the pit
and cast stones on me;
⁵⁴ water closed over my head;
I said, 'I am lost.'

⁵⁵ "I called on thy name, O LORD,
from the depths of the pit;
⁵⁶ thou didst hear my plea, 'Do not
close
thine ear to my cry for help!'"
⁵⁷ Thou didst come near when I called
on thee;
thou didst say, 'Do not fear!'

m Heb uncertain

25–51: A wise man counsels submission and penitence in acknowledgment of God's righteousness and mercy. **29:** *His mouth in the dust*, i.e. in self-abasement. **33:** *Willingly*, lit., "from his heart."
38: *Good and evil*, compare Is.45.7; Am.3.6. **40:** *Us*, i.e. the nation Israel. **48:** See 2.11; Jer.9.1.
52–66: An individual psalm pleading God's past mercies and praying for vindication and the requiting of the enemy (compare 5.1–22). The sentiment of v. 59 is in contrast to that of v. 39 in the previous section. **54:** Symbol of drowning, see Jon.2.3–6.

58 "Thou hast taken up my cause, O Lord,
thou hast redeemed my life.

59 Thou hast seen the wrong done to me, O LORD;
judge thou my cause.

60 Thou hast seen all their vengeance,
all their devices against me.

61 "Thou hast heard their taunts, O LORD,
all their devices against me.

62 The lips and thoughts of my assailants
are against me all the day long.

63 Behold their sitting and their rising;
I am the burden of their songs.

64 "Thou wilt requite them, O LORD,
according to the work of their hands.

65 Thou wilt give them dullness of heart;
thy curse will be on them.

66 Thou wilt pursue them in anger
and destroy them
from under thy heavens, O LORD."ⁿ

4 How the gold has grown dim,
how the pure gold is changed!
The holy stones lie scattered
at the head of every street.

2 The precious sons of Zion,
worth their weight in fine gold,
how they are reckoned as earthen
pots,
the work of a potter's hands!

3 Even the jackals give the breast
and suckle their young,
but the daughter of my people has
become cruel,
like the ostriches in the wilderness.

4 The tongue of the nursing cleaves
to the roof of its mouth for thirst;

the children beg for food,
but no one gives to them.

5 Those who feasted on dainties
perish in the streets;
those who were brought up in purple
lie on ash heaps.

6 For the chastisement^o of the
daughter of my people has been
greater
than the punishment^p of Sodom,
which was overthrown in a moment,
no hand being laid on it.^q

7 Her princes were purer than snow,
whiter than milk;
their bodies were more ruddy than
coral,
the beauty of their form^r was
like sapphire.^s

8 Now their visage is blacker than
soot,
they are not recognized in the
streets;
their skin has shriveled upon their
bones,
it has become as dry as wood.

9 Happier were the victims of the
sword
than the victims of hunger,
who pined away, stricken
by want of the fruits of the field.

10 The hands of compassionate women
have boiled their own children;
they became their food
in the destruction of the daughter
of my people.

11 The LORD gave full vent to his wrath,
he poured out his hot anger;
and he kindled a fire in Zion,

ⁿ Syr Compare Gk Vg: Heb *the heavens of the LORD*
^o Or *iniquity* ^p Or *sin* ^q Heb *uncertain*
^r Heb *uncertain* ^s Heb *lapis lazuli*

64-66: These verses recall the cries against the enemies of the persecuted righteous in the Psalms; see Pss.3.7; 17.13,14; 35.26; 59.11-13; compare Jer.11.20-23; 18.21,22.

4.1-22: The horrors of the siege and sack of Jerusalem. 1-2: *Gold . . . holy stones*, the temple treasures; but the people are more precious to God. 3: Jerusalem can no longer care for her children. 4-5,9-10: See 2 Kg.25.3. 12: See Is. chs. 36-37. 13-16: Judah's religious leaders had

- which consumed its foundations.
- ¹² The kings of the earth did not believe,
or any of the inhabitants of the world,
that foe or enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem.
- ¹³ This was for the sins of her prophets
and the iniquities of her priests,
who shed in the midst of her the blood of the righteous.
- ¹⁴ They wandered, blind, through the streets,
so defiled with blood
that none could touch their garments.
- ¹⁵ "Away! Unclean!" men cried at them;
"Away! Away! Touch not!"
So they became fugitives and wanderers;
men said among the nations,
"They shall stay with us no longer."
- ¹⁶ The LORD himself has scattered them,
he will regard them no more;
no honor was shown to the priests,
no favor to the elders.
- ¹⁷ Our eyes failed, ever watching vainly for help;
in our watching^f we watched for a nation which could not save.
- ¹⁸ Men dogged our steps
so that we could not walk in our streets;
our end drew near; our days were numbered;
for our end had come.
- ¹⁹ Our pursuers were swifter
than the vultures in the heavens;
they chased us on the mountains,
they lay in wait for us in the wilderness.
- ²⁰ The breath of our nostrils, the LORD's anointed,
was taken in their pits,
he of whom we said, "Under his shadow
we shall live among the nations."
- ²¹ Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,
dweller in the land of Uz;
but to you also the cup shall pass;
you shall become drunk and strip yourself bare.
- ²² The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter of Zion, is accomplished,
he will keep you in exile no longer;
but your iniquity, O daughter of Edom, he will punish,
he will uncover your sins.
- 5** Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us;
behold, and see our disgrace!
- ² Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,
our homes to aliens.
- ³ We have become orphans,
fatherless;
our mothers are like widows.
- ⁴ We must pay for the water we drink,
the wood we get must be bought.
- ⁵ With a yoke^u on our necks we are hard driven;
we are weary, we are given no rest.
- ⁶ We have given the hand to Egypt,
and to Assyria, to get bread enough.

^f Heb uncertain

^u Symmachus: Heb lacks *with a yoke*

been moral lepers. **17:** *A nation which could not save*, Egypt (Jer.37.5-10). **20:** *The LORD's anointed*, king Zedekiah (2 Kg.25.4-6). *Pits*, hunters' traps. **21-22:** Unlike chs. 1-3, which end with a prayer for mercy and deliverance, ch. 4 ends with a vow or prophecy that *Edom* too will suffer for her treachery to her brother Jacob (see Ob.8-14).

5.1-22: A community psalm of lament and petition for restoration (like Pss. 44; 74; 79; 80).

1-14: The misery of Judah's people under the heel of Babylon. **8:** *Slaves rule*, important posts

- ⁷ Our fathers sinned, and are no more;
and we bear their iniquities.
- ⁸ Slaves rule over us;
there is none to deliver us from
their hand.
- ⁹ We get our bread at the peril of
our lives,
because of the sword in the
wilderness.
- ¹⁰ Our skin is hot as an oven
with the burning heat of famine.
- ¹¹ Women are ravished in Zion,
virgins in the towns of Judah.
- ¹² Princes are hung up by their hands;
no respect is shown to the elders.
- ¹³ Young men are compelled to grind
at the mill;
and boys stagger under loads of
wood.
- ¹⁴ The old men have quit the city gate,
the young men their music.
- ¹⁵ The joy of our hearts has ceased;
our dancing has been turned to
mourning.
- ¹⁶ The crown has fallen from our head;
woe to us, for we have sinned!
- ¹⁷ For this our heart has become sick,
for these things our eyes have
grown dim,
- ¹⁸ for Mount Zion which lies desolate;
jackals prowl over it.
- ¹⁹ But thou, O LORD, dost reign for
ever;
thy throne endures to all
generations.
- ²⁰ Why dost thou forget us for ever,
why dost thou so long forsake us?
- ²¹ Restore us to thyself, O LORD, that
we may be restored!
Renew our days as of old!
- ²² Or hast thou utterly rejected us?
Art thou exceedingly angry with
us?

were sometimes given to slaves of the king. **15-18:** The Davidic monarchy is no more, and the temple site is desolate. **19-22:** A plea for divine remembrance and mercy (compare Pss.74.1-2; 79.5-8; 80.1-7).

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Ezekiel was a priest whose ministry to his fellow exiles extended from 593 (1.2) to 563 B.C., if the enigmatic "thirtieth year" in 1.1 is taken as the thirtieth year after his call and as the date of the initial compilation of the book of Ezekiel by the prophet himself. The latest dated oracle included in the book is of the year 571 B.C. (29.17). The book of Ezekiel has the most thoroughgoing chronological notations of any of the books of the prophets, with only three dates out of order (26.1; 29.17; 33.21). The dates do not necessarily apply to all the oracles following a given date, and the chronological position of undated oracles may be ascertained from the nature of their contents. The capture and destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. was a decisive factor in Ezekiel's ministry. The oracles of warning (chs. 1–24) are to be dated before the fall of Jerusalem. The oracles of hope (chs. 33–48) belong after the fall of Jerusalem. The oracles against the foreign nations (chs. 25–32) belong to the middle period of Ezekiel's ministry (587 to 585 B.C.; but 29.17–21, 571 B.C.)

The original collection was rewritten and expanded by an editor, but Ezekiel's beautiful prose and poetry may be recognized throughout the book. The text has suffered much in transmission; as a consequence, the interpretation is frequently uncertain.

As a prophet to the exiles, Ezekiel assured his hearers of the abiding presence of God among them. He constantly emphasized the LORD's role in the events of the day, so that Israel and the nations "will know that I am the LORD" (a refrain which occurs many times throughout the book). He underscored the integrity of the individual and his personal responsibility to God. To a helpless and hopeless people he brought hope of restoration to homeland and temple by their just and holy God. In Ezekiel we have an unparalleled synthesis of the terrestrial and celestial in Israel's religion, truly fitting for one whose ministry marks the transition from pre-exilic Israelite religion to post-exilic Judaism.

IN THE THIRTIETH YEAR, IN THE fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. ² On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), ³ the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chalde'ans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

4 As I looked, behold, a stormy

wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming bronze. ⁵ And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the form of men, ⁶ but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished

1.1–3.27: The call of Ezekiel. 1.1–3: **Superscription.** *The thirtieth year*, perhaps the thirtieth year after Ezekiel's call, and if so, the date of the initial composition of the book, 563 B.C. (compare Jer.36.1–3). *Fifth day of the fourth month . . . , fifth year of the exile* would be July 31, 593 B.C. This is reckoned from a lunar calendar, with the year beginning in the spring. The name *Ezekiel* means "God strengthens." *Chebar*, a canal which is mentioned also in the Babylonian records, flowing southeast from its fork above Babylon, through Nippur, and rejoining the Euphrates near Erech. *Hand of the LORD* expresses Ezekiel's sense of divine compulsion (3.14,22; 8.1; 33.22; 37.1; 40.1).

1.4–28a: The throne chariot vision. Compare the imagery in 1 Kg.22.19–22; Is.6.1–9. 4: *Out of the north*, a literary figure drawn from Canaanite mythology, according to which the gods lived in the north. *Stormy wind* (1 Kg.19.11), *cloud* (Ex.19.16), and *fire* (1 Kg.19.11–12) are all elements in the theophany (manifestation) of God. 5: *The living creatures* (Rev.4.7) are cherubim, guardians of God's throne (see Ex.25.10–22; 1 Kg.6.23–28), namely winged human-

bronze. ⁸ Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: ⁹ their wings touched one another; they went every one straight forward, without turning as they went.

¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man in front;^a the four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle at the back.^b

¹¹ Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above; each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. ¹² And each went straight forward; wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. ¹³ In the midst of^c the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. ¹⁴ And the living creatures darted to and fro, like a flash of lightning.

¹⁵ Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them.^d ¹⁶ As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of a chrysolite; and the four had the same likeness, their construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. ¹⁷ When they went, they went in any of their four directions^e without turning as they went. ¹⁸ The four wheels had rims and they had spokes;^f and their rims were full of eyes round about. ¹⁹ And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. ²⁰ Wherever the spirit would go, they went, and the wheels rose along

with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²¹ When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

²² Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, shining like crystal,^g spread out above their heads. ²³ And under the firmament their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another; and each creature had two wings covering its body. ²⁴ And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the thunder of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of a host; when they stood still, they let down their wings. ²⁵ And there came a voice from above the firmament over their heads; when they stood still, they let down their wings.

²⁶ And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire;^h and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form. ²⁷ And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about; and downward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him.ⁱ ²⁸ Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.

Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And

^a Cn: Heb lacks *in front*

^b Cn: Heb lacks *at the back*

^c Gk Old Latin: Heb *And the likeness of*

^d Heb of their faces ^e Heb on their four sides

^f Cn: Heb uncertain

^g Gk: Heb *awesome crystal*

^h Heb *lapis lazuli* ⁱ Or *it*

headed lions or oxen, symbolizing mobility, intelligence, and strength. **15-21:** *The four wheels* (compare the four faces of the creatures) symbolize omni-directional mobility. **22:** In ancient cosmology, the firmament separated the waters above the earth from the earth (Gen.1.6-8). **26-28:** Thus the LORD was enthroned above his creatures; compare the LORD enthroned above the cherubim in Ex.37.9 (on the ark); 1 Sam.4.4.

when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

2 And he said to me, "Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you."² And when he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me upon my feet; and I heard him speaking to me.³ And he said to me, "Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to a nation^j of rebels, who have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day.⁴ The people also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them; and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.'⁵ And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that there has been a prophet among them.⁶ And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit upon scorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.⁷ And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear; for they are a rebellious house.

8 "But you, son of man, hear what I say to you; be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth, and eat what I give you."⁹ And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and, lo, a written scroll was in it;¹⁰ and he spread it before me; and it had writing on the front and on the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning

3 and woe.¹ And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the

house of Israel."² So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.³ And he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it." Then I ate it; and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.

4 And he said to me, "Son of man, go, get you to the house of Israel, and speak with my words to them.⁵ For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel—⁶ not to many peoples of foreign speech and a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you.⁷ But the house of Israel will not listen to you; for they are not willing to listen to me; because all the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and of a stubborn heart.⁸ Behold, I have made your face hard against their faces, and your forehead hard against their foreheads.⁹ Like adamant harder than flint have I made your forehead; fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house."¹⁰ Moreover he said to me, "Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears.¹¹ And go, get you to the exiles, to your people, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God'; whether they hear or refuse to hear."

12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and as the glory of the LORD arose^k from its place, I heard behind me the sound of a great earthquake;¹³ it was the sound of the wings of the living crea-

^j Syr: Heb *nations*

^k Cn: Heb *blessed be the glory of the LORD*

1.28b-3.27: The five commissions. 1.28b-2.8a: The first commission. The non-messianic term, *son of man*, occurs ninety-three times in Ezekiel; it emphasizes man's finite dependence and insignificance before God's infinite power and glory (Ps.8.4). **2.2: The Spirit** is synonymous with "Spirit of the LORD" (11.5; 37.1; Is.61.1). **5: Rebellious house**, a designation of Judah, whose apostasy was the cause of the exile (Jer.2.29; 3.13). **6-7:** Compare the LORD's encouragement of the prophet in Jer.1.6-8,16-19. **2.8b-3.3:** So that he will speak only what the LORD has written, Ezekiel must eat a papyrus *scroll* filled with words of woe (compare Jer.15.16; Zech.5.1-4; Rev.10.8-11). *Sweet*, Ps.19.10. **3.4-9:** Second commission. Ezekiel's determination to prophesy (Jer.1.18) must be stronger than Israel's refusal to hear (Am.7.10-17; Jer.20.7-18). **10-15:** Third commission. An editorial reduplication of the preceding materials, emphasizing the mission to the exiles (2.4-5). *Tel-abib* (derived from Babylonian *til abubi*, "mound of the

tures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, that sounded like a great earthquake. ¹⁴ The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the LORD being strong upon me; ¹⁵ and I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who dwelt by the river Chebar.¹ And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

16 And at the end of seven days, the word of the LORD came to me:

¹⁷ "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ¹⁸ If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. ¹⁹ But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you will have saved your life."

²⁰ Again, if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.

²¹ Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and you will have saved your life."

22 And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said to me,

"Arise, go forth into the plain,"^m and there I will speak with you."²³ So I arose and went forth into the plain;^m and, lo, the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face. ²⁴ But the Spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet; and he spoke with me and said to me, "Go, shut yourself within your house. ²⁵ And you, O son of man, behold, cords will be placed upon you, and you shall be bound with them, so that you cannot go out among the people; ²⁶ and I will make your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be dumb and unable to reprove them; for they are a rebellious house. ²⁷ But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God'; he that will hear, let him hear; and he that will refuse to hear, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house."

4 "And you, O son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and portray upon it a city, even Jerusalem; ² and put siegeworks against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast up a mound against it; set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it round about. ³ And take an iron plate, and place it as an iron wall between you and the city; and set your face toward it, and let it be in a state of siege, and press the siege against it. This is a sign for the house of Israel."

4 "Then lie upon your left side, and I will lay the punishment of the house of Israel upon you;" for the number of the days that you lie upon it, you

¹ Heb Chebar, and to where they dwell. Another reading is Chebar, and I sat where they sat
^m Or valley ⁿ Cn: Heb you shall lay . . . upon it

deluge"), a Jewish settlement near Nippur, not far from the Chebar canal. 16-21: Fourth commission. This *watchman* passage (Jer.6.17; Hos.9.8) is an application of Ezekiel's doctrine of personal responsibility (18.1-32) to the prophetic office (33.7-16). 22-27: Fifth commission. *The plain* (valley) is the southern Tigris-Euphrates valley (37.1; Gen.11.2). Ezekiel's *dumbness* may refer to his apparent inability to speak of anything but the doom of Judah and Jerusalem for the following seven and one-half years (24.26-27; 33.21-22).

4.1-5.17: Symbolic actions describing the coming siege of Jerusalem. 4.1-3: A sun-dried brick (common in Babylonia) with a relief drawing of Jerusalem under siege, and an iron plate, a griddle, symbolizing God's role in Jerusalem's fall (Jer.21.5). 4-8: As a symbol of the years of the punishment of Israel (exact significance unknown), the prophet is directed to lie on his

shall bear their punishment. ⁵ For I assign to you a number of days, three hundred and ninety days, equal to the number of the years of their punishment; so long shall you bear the punishment of the house of Israel. ⁶ And when you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of Judah; forty days I assign you, a day for each year. ⁷ And you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem, with your arm bared; and you shall prophesy against the city. ⁸ And, behold, I will put cords upon you, so that you cannot turn from one side to the other, till you have completed the days of your siege.

⁹ "And you, take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt, and put them into a single vessel, and make bread of them. During the number of days that you lie upon your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat it. ¹⁰ And the food which you eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day; once a day you shall eat it. ¹¹ And water you shall drink by measure, the sixth part of a hin; once a day you shall drink. ¹² And you shall eat it as a barley cake, baking it in their sight on human dung." ¹³ And the LORD said, "Thus shall the people of Israel eat their bread unclean, among the nations whither I will drive them." ¹⁴ Then I said, "Ah Lord God! behold, I have never defiled myself; from my youth up till now I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has foul flesh come into my mouth."

¹⁵ Then he said to me, "See, I will let

you have cow's dung instead of human dung, on which you may prepare your bread." ¹⁶ Moreover he said to me, "Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with fearfulness; and they shall drink water by measure and in dismay. ¹⁷ I will do this that they may lack bread and water, and look at one another in dismay, and waste away under their punishment.

5 "And you, O son of man, take a sharp sword; use it as a barber's razor and pass it over your head and your beard; then take balances for weighing, and divide the hair. ² A third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are completed; and a third part you shall take and strike with the sword round about the city; and a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them. ³ And you shall take from these a small number, and bind them in the skirts of your robe. ⁴ And of these again you shall take some, and cast them into the fire, and burn them in the fire; from there a fire will come forth into all the house of Israel. ⁵ Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries round about her. ⁶ And she has wickedly rebelled against my ordinances^o more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries round about her, by rejecting my ordinances and not walking in my statutes. ⁷ Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you are more turbulent than the nations that are

^o Or changed my ordinances into wickedness

left side *three-hundred ninety days*, and as a symbol of the years of the punishment of Judah to lie on his right side *forty days* (compare the forty years in the wilderness, Num.14.33; Jer.25.11-12). The actual performance of this command seems most unlikely. **9-17:** Unclean food and rationing reflect the rigors of the siege during which the people even practiced cannibalism (Jer.19.9; Lam.2.20). **9:** Mixing the grains indicates scarcity of foodstuffs, not uncleanness. **12:** *Human dung* was considered unclean (Dt.23.12-14). Dried *cow dung* was and is common fuel in the East. **14:** Compare Lev.17.10-16. **16:** *Staff of bread*, 5.16. Jerusalem's water during the siege came from cisterns and two springs, Gihon in the Kidron Valley and En-rogel to the south (2 Kg.20.20). **5.1-17:** Shorn hair as a symbol of the fate awaiting the people of Jerusalem. The *sword* is appropriately used as a *razor* to convey the idea of military defeat. **5:** *Center of the nations*, Jerusalem, the holy city, was regarded as the geographical center of the earth (see

round about you, and have not walked in my statutes or kept my ordinances, but have acted^p according to the ordinances of the nations that are round about you; ⁸ therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, even I, am against you; and I will execute judgments in the midst of you in the sight of the nations. ⁹ And because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never do again.

¹⁰ Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in the midst of you, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments on you, and any of you who survive I will scatter to all the winds.

¹¹ Wherefore, as I live, says the Lord GOD, surely, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will cut you down;^q my eye will not spare, and I will have no pity.

¹² A third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in the midst of you; a third part shall fall by the sword round about you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them.

¹³ "Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken in my jealousy, when I spend my fury upon them. ¹⁴ Moreover I will make you a desolation and an object of reproach among the nations round about you and in the sight of all that pass by.

¹⁵ You shall be^r a reproach and a taunt, a warning and a horror, to the nations round about you, when I execute judgments on you in anger and fury, and with furious chastisements—I, the LORD, have spoken—¹⁶ when I loose against you^s my deadly arrows

of famine, arrows for destruction, which I will loose to destroy you, and when I bring more and more famine upon you, and break your staff of bread. ¹⁷ I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will rob you of your children; pestilence and blood shall pass through you; and I will bring the sword upon you. I, the LORD, have spoken."

6 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, ³ and say, You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

⁴ Your altars shall become desolate, and your incense altars shall be broken; and I will cast down your slain before your idols. ⁵ And I will lay the dead bodies of the people of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

⁶ Wherever you dwell your cities shall be waste and your high places ruined, so that your altars will be waste and ruined,^t your idols broken and destroyed, your incense altars cut down, and your works wiped out. ⁷ And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and you shall know that I am the LORD.

⁸ "Yet I will leave some of you alive. When you have among the nations some who escape the sword, and when you are scattered through the countries, ⁹ then those of you who escape will remember me among the nations where they are carried captive, when I have broken^u their

^p Another reading is *and have not acted*

^q Another reading is *I will withdraw*

^r Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *And it shall be* ^s Heb *them*

^t Syr Vg Tg: Heb *and be made guilty*

^u Syr Vg Tg: Heb *I have been broken*

38.12, "center [literally, navel] of the earth"), as later Rome was looked upon as the navel of the earth. 14: 36.34; compare Jer.24.9–10. 17: 14.21.

6.1–14: Oracle against the mountains. Compare 36.1–15. The address to the mountains is figurative for the *high places*, funerary cairns used as open-air pagan sanctuaries. The cultic equipment at these sanctuaries included *incense altars* and statues or other representations (such as the oak or other trees; v. 13; Hos.4.13) of fertility goddesses such as Asherah and Anath. *Works* (v. 6) may refer to the sacred pillars or standing stones, which may have been

wanton heart which has departed from me, and blinded their eyes which turn wantonly after their idols; and they will be loathsome in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations. ¹⁰ And they shall know that I am the LORD; I have not said in vain that I would do this evil to them."

¹¹ Thus says the Lord God: "Clap your hands, and stamp your foot, and say, Alas! because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel; for they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. ¹² He that is far off shall die of pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that is left and is preserved shall die of famine. Thus I will spend my fury upon them. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when their slain lie among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, on all the mountain tops, under every green tree, and under every leafy oak, wherever they offered pleasing odor to all their idols. ¹⁴ And I will stretch out my hand against them, and make the land desolate and waste, throughout all their habitations, from the wilderness to Riblah." Then they will know that I am the LORD."

⁷ The word of the LORD came to me: ² "And you, O son of man, thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel: An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. ³ Now the end is upon you, and I will let loose my anger upon you, and will judge you according to your ways; and I will punish you for all your abominations. ⁴ And my eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity; but I will punish you for your ways, while your abomina-

tions are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁵ "Thus says the Lord God: Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes. ⁶ An end has come, the end has come; it has awakened against you. Behold, it comes. ⁷ Your doom" has come to you, O inhabitant of the land; the time has come, the day is near, a day of tumult, and not of joyful shouting upon the mountains. ⁸ Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you, and judge you according to your ways; and I will punish you for all your abominations. ⁹ And my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will punish you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the LORD, who smite.

¹⁰ "Behold, the day! Behold, it comes! Your doom" has come, injustice* has blossomed, pride has budded. ¹¹ Violence has grown up into a rod of wickedness; none of them shall remain, nor their abundance, nor their wealth; neither shall there be pre-eminence among them.^y ¹² The time has come, the day draws near. Let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn, for wrath is upon all their multitude. ¹³ For the seller shall not return to what he has sold, while they live. For wrath^z is upon all their multitude; it shall not turn back; and because of his iniquity, none can maintain his life.^a

¹⁴ "They have blown the trumpet and made all ready; but none goes to battle, for my wrath is upon all their multitude. ¹⁵ The sword is without, pestilence and famine are within; he

^y Another reading is *Diblah*

^w The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^x Or *the rod*

^y The Hebrew of verse 11 is uncertain

^z Cn: Heb *vision* a Heb *obscure*

commemorative monuments (Ex.23.24; Dt.7.5). **14:** *From the wilderness to Riblah* (the wilderness of south Judah and Riblah in northern Syria) was the maximum extent of Israelite territory (47.16; 1 Kg.8.65).

7.1-27: Oracles on the approaching judgment. **1-4:** The theme, *the end*, is reminiscent of Am.8.2; it is the sequel to the judgments of chs. 4-6. **3:** Compare Ps.78.49. **7:** *The day* (Jl.1.15; Mal.4.1; Heb.10.25) is "the day of the LORD" (Am.5.18-20; Is.2.11,12-17). **10-23a:** As Jerusalem's end approaches, people will sell at a loss to recover what they can, and the buyers will have little prospect of retaining their purchases. The trumpet calls to the defense, but instead of battle-dress one sees only signs of mourning (Jer.16.6-9; Is.15.2). The gold and silver they had

that is in the field dies by the sword; and him that is in the city famine and pestilence devour. ¹⁶ And if any survivors escape, they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, every one over his iniquity. ¹⁷ All hands are feeble, and all knees weak as water. ¹⁸ They gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror covers them; shame is upon all faces, and baldness on all their heads. ¹⁹ They cast their silver into the streets, and their gold is like an unclean thing; their silver and gold are not able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD; they cannot satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it. For it was the stumbling block of their iniquity. ²⁰ Their^b beautiful ornament they used for vainglory, and they made their abominable images and their detestable things of it; therefore I will make it an unclean thing to them. ²¹ And I will give it into the hands of foreigners for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall profane it. ²² I will turn my face from them, that they may profane my precious^c place; robbers shall enter and profane it, ²³ and make a desolation.^d

"Because the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence, ²⁴ I will bring the worst of the nations to take possession of their houses; I will put an end to their proud might, and their holy places shall be profaned. ²⁵ When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none. ²⁶ Disaster comes upon disaster, rumor follows rumor; they seek a vision from the prophet, but the law perishes from the priest, and counsel from the elders. ²⁷ The king mourns, the prince is wrapped in despair, and the hands

of the people of the land are palsied by terror. According to their way I will do to them, and according to their own judgments I will judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD."

8 In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me. ² Then I beheld, and, lo, a form that had the appearance of a man;^e below what appeared to be his loins it was fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze. ³ He put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. ⁴ And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

⁵ Then he said to me, "Son of man, lift up your eyes now in the direction of the north." So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance, was this image of jealousy. ⁶ And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations."

⁷ And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall. ⁸ Then said he to me, "Son of man, dig in the wall"; and when I dug in the wall, lo,

^b Syr Symmachus: Heb *Its*

^d Cn: Heb *make the chain*

^c Or *secret*

^e Gk: Heb *fire*

cast into idols cannot nourish the body, just as the idols themselves are useless (Jer.2.26-28; 10.1-16; Zeph.1.18) except as booty for the conqueror. **22:** *My precious place*, the temple. **23b-27:** The confusion and brutality of the invasion and siege. *Peace* recalls Jer.6.14; see also Ezek.22.28; the distraught leadership is reminiscent of Jer.4.9-10; 13.13.

8.1-11.25: The temple visions. 8.1-18: The vision of idolatry (September 17, 592 B.C.). **1-4:** The gateway to the inner court was the third gate leading north from the palace complex into the temple precincts (1 Kg.7.12; 2 Kg.20.4). The *seat . . .* was a niche for a figured slab. **7-13:** The description suggests the worship of Osiris, allegedly assuring a happy after-life; the wall-

there was a door. ⁹ And he said to me, "Go in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here." ¹⁰ So I went in and saw; and there, portrayed upon the wall round about, were all kinds of creeping things, and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel. ¹¹ And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, with Ja-azani'ah the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up. ¹² Then he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, every man in his room of pictures? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'" ¹³ He said also to me, "You will see still greater abominations which they commit."

¹⁴ Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. ¹⁵ Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? You will see still greater abominations than these."

¹⁶ And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD; and behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, worshipping the sun toward the east. ¹⁷ Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too slight a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit

here, that they should fill the land with violence, and provoke me further to anger? Lo, they put the branch to their nose. ¹⁸ Therefore I will deal in wrath; my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; and though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

⁹ Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, "Draw near, you executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." ² And lo, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, every man with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his side. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

³ Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherubim on which it rested to the threshold of the house; and he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his side. ⁴ And the LORD said to him, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." ⁵ And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and smite; your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity; ⁶ slay old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one upon whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the house. ⁷ Then he said to them, "Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain. Go forth." So

f Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb rooms

paintings recall those of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. **14-15:** *Tammuz*, the Sumero-Accadian vegetation god; the weeping was for his descent into the underworld, coinciding with the annual decline of vegetation. **16-18:** This may reflect the Egyptian worship of the sun-god, who was thought to bring forth all vegetation, or the worship of Tammuz-Adonis (compare Is.17.10). The *branch*, or vine-sprout, may be a symbol in the cult rites.

9.1-11: The punishment of the guilty. 1-2: From the *north* (see 1.4 n.) came the divine *executioners* (compare the temple guards, or "watchmen," in 2 Kg.11.18, designated by the same Hebrew word) and a man clothed in linen, who functioned as the LORD's scribe, as did Nabu in the Babylonian pantheon. *Linen*, a ritually clean fabric, was worn by priests (Lev.6.10) and angels (Dan.10.5). **4:** The *mark* was the Hebrew letter "tau," made like an X (compare Rev.7.3-4). **6:** The *elders* are those of 8.16. **8:** *All that remains*, those remaining in Palestine after 597 B.C.

they went forth, and smote in the city. ⁸ And while they were smiting, and I was left alone, I fell upon my face, and cried, "Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all that remains of Israel in the outpouring of thy wrath upon Jerusalem?"

⁹ Then he said to me, "The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see.' ¹⁰ As for me, my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity, but I will requite their deeds upon their heads."

¹¹ And lo, the man clothed in linen, with the writing case at his side, brought back word, saying, "I have done as thou didst command me."

10 Then I looked, and behold, on the firmament that was over the heads of the cherubim there appeared above them something like a sapphire, in form resembling a throne. ² And he said to the man clothed in linen, "Go in among the whirling wheels underneath the cherubim; fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city."

And he went in before my eyes. ³ Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the house, when the man went in; and a cloud filled the inner court. ⁴ And the glory of the LORD went up from the cherubim to the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the glory of the LORD. ⁵ And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

⁶ And when he commanded the man clothed in linen, "Take fire from between the whirling wheels, from

between the cherubim," he went in and stood beside a wheel. ⁷ And a cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim to the fire that was between the cherubim, and took some of it, and put it into the hands of the man clothed in linen, who took it and went out. ⁸ The cherubim appeared to have the form of a human hand under their wings.

⁹ And I looked, and behold, there were four wheels beside the cherubim, one beside each cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was like sparkling chrysolite. ¹⁰ And as for their appearance, the four had the same likeness, as if a wheel were within a wheel. ¹¹ When they went, they went in any of their four directions^g without turning as they went, but in whatever direction the front wheel faced the others followed without turning as they went. ¹² And^h their rims, and their spokes,ⁱ and the wheels were full of eyes round about—the wheels that the four of them had. ¹³ As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing the whirling wheels. ¹⁴ And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of the cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

¹⁵ And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the river Chebar. ¹⁶ And when the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels did not turn from beside them. ¹⁷ When they stood still, these stood still, and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them; for the spirit of the living creatures^j was in them.

^g Heb on their four sides

^h GK: Heb And their whole body and

ⁱ Heb spokes and their wings ^j Or of life

10.1-22 and 11.22-25: The LORD leaves his temple, and instructs the scribe to get coals from the fire between the cherubim (1.13) and to scatter them over the city (compare Gen.19.1-29; Rev.8.5). **3-4:** The cloud of the glory of the LORD recalls Ex.16.10; Num.10.34. The expression the glory of the LORD appears nineteen times in Ezekiel in the sense of the objective overpowering majesty of God, not so much as an attribute as an expression for God himself (Lev.9.23; Num.20.6). **12:** Full of eyes, symbolic of the all-seeing nature of God (Rev.4.8).

18 Then the glory of the LORD went forth from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. ¹⁹ And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight as they went forth, with the wheels beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the house of the LORD; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them.

20 These were the living creatures that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were cherubim. ²¹ Each had four faces, and each four wings, and underneath their wings the semblance of human hands. ²² And as for the likeness of their faces, they were the very faces whose appearance I had seen by the river Chebar. They went every one straight forward.

||| The Spirit lifted me up, and brought me to the east gate of the house of the LORD, which faces east. And behold, at the door of the gateway there were twenty-five men; and I saw among them Ja-azani'ah the son of Az-zur, and Pelati'ah the son of Benai'ah, princes of the people. ² And he said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city; ³ who say, 'The time is not near^k to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh.' ⁴ Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man."

5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and he said to me, "Say, Thus says the LORD: So you think, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. ⁶ You have multiplied your slain in this city, and

have filled its streets with the slain. ⁷ Therefore thus says the Lord God: Your slain whom you have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron; but you shall be brought forth out of the midst of it. ⁸ You have feared the sword; and I will bring the sword upon you, says the Lord God. ⁹ And I will bring you forth out of the midst of it, and give you into the hands of foreigners, and execute judgments upon you. ¹⁰ You shall fall by the sword; I will judge you at the border of Israel; and you shall know that I am the LORD. ¹¹ This city shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the flesh in the midst of it; I will judge you at the border of Israel; ¹² and you shall know that I am the LORD; for you have not walked in my statutes, nor executed my ordinances, but have acted according to the ordinances of the nations that are round about you."

13 And it came to pass, while I was prophesying, that Pelati'ah the son of Benai'ah died. Then I fell down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, "Ah Lord God! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?"

14 And the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁵ "Son of man, your brethren, even your brethren, your fellow exiles,^l the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'They have gone far from the LORD; to us this land is given for a possession.' ¹⁶ Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord

^k Or Is not the time near . . . ?

^l Gk Syr: Heb men of your kindred

19: *East gate*, the main processional gate into the temple precinct (Ps.118.19–20; 24.7,9). Here God in his throne chariot paused a moment and then forsook his sanctuary, desecrated by pagan rites and superficial worship. The departure continues in 11.22–25.

11.1–25: **Judgment and promise.** 1–13: These verses should follow 8.18. *Jaazaniah* and *Pelatiah* are otherwise unknown. *Wicked counsel* perhaps refers to the plot between Egypt and Zedekiah's pro-Egyptian counselors against Nebuchadrezzar (Jer.27.1–3; 37.5,7,11). Encouraged by the negotiations, they assure the populace of the city's security and urge them to continue domestic construction. Accusing the leaders of gross violence (ch. 22; Jer.34.8–16), Ezekiel tells them that the city's walls (the *caldron*; 24.1–14) will not protect them, but they will be taken to Israel's *borders*, there to be judged (at Riblah; Jer.52.24–27). 13: Ezekiel added this note when these oracles were transcribed (1.1). 14–21: This passage condemns the attitude

GOD: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while^m in the countries where they have gone.¹⁷ Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'¹⁸ And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations.¹⁹ And I will give them oneⁿ heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.²¹ But as for those^o whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will requite their deeds upon their own heads, says the Lord GOD."

22 Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them.²³ And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.²⁴ And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into Chalde'a, to the exiles. Then the vision that I had seen went up from me.²⁵ And I told the exiles all the things that the LORD had showed me.

12 The word of the LORD came to me:² "Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who

have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not;³ for they are a rebellious house. Therefore, son of man, prepare for yourself an exile's baggage, and go into exile by day in their sight; you shall go like an exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will understand, though^p they are a rebellious house.⁴ You shall bring out your baggage by day in their sight, as baggage for exile; and you shall go forth yourself at evening in their sight, as men do who must go into exile.⁵ Dig through the wall in their sight, and go^q out through it.⁶ In their sight you shall lift the baggage upon your shoulder, and carry it out in the dark; you shall cover your face, that you may not see the land; for I have made you a sign for the house of Israel."

7 And I did as I was commanded. I brought out my baggage by day, as baggage for exile, and in the evening I dug through the wall with my own hands; I went forth in the dark, carrying my outfit upon my shoulder in their sight.

8 In the morning the word of the LORD came to me:⁹ "Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?'¹⁰ Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are in it.'¹¹ Say, 'I am a sign for you: as I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall go into exile, into captivity.'¹² And the prince who is among them shall lift his baggage

^m Or in small measure

ⁿ Another reading is a new

^o Cn: Heb To the heart of their detestable things and their abominations their heart goes

^p Or will see that ^q Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb bring

^r Heb in the midst of them

which maintained that the exiles had borne God's punishment and their property now belonged to those who remained. Ezekiel warns them that God is with his exiled people and will restore them, while they, the presumptuous idolators, will be punished (Jer.24.1-10). *New heart*, Jer.32.37-41. **22-25:** See 10.1-22. **23:** *The mountain to the east* is the Mount of Olives.

12.1-20: Symbols of the Exile. **1-16:** Ezekiel is commanded to symbolize by appropriate actions the collecting of whatever goods the exiles could carry (Jer.10.17) and the leaving of the city in the cool of the evening through its breached wall. *Dig through the wall* indicates a Babylonian locale in which mud-brick ("adobe") houses were common. Many scholars justifiably feel this oracle has been revised to refer to Zedekiah (the *prince*) who left Jerusalem by night.

upon his shoulder in the dark, and shall go forth; he^s shall dig through the wall and go^t out through it; he shall cover his face, that he may not see the land with his eyes. ¹³ And I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon in the land of the Chalde'ans, yet he shall not see it; and he shall die there. ¹⁴ And I will scatter toward every wind all who are round about him, his helpers^u and all his troops; and I will unsheathe the sword after them. ¹⁵ And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries. ¹⁶ But I will let a few of them escape from the sword, from famine and pestilence, that they may confess all their abominations among the nations where they go, and may know that I am the LORD."

¹⁷ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸ "Son of man, eat your bread with quaking, and drink water with trembling and with fearfulness; ¹⁹ and say of the people of the land, Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with fearfulness, and drink water in dismay, because their land will be stripped of all it contains, on account of the violence of all those who dwell in it. ²⁰ And the inhabited cities shall be laid waste, and the land shall become a desolation; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

²¹ And the word of the LORD came to me: ²² "Son of man, what is this proverb that you have about the land of Israel, saying, 'The days grow long, and every vision comes to nought'?"

²³ Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the

LORD GOD: I will put an end to this proverb, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel.' But say to them, The days are at hand, and the fulfilment^v of every vision. ²⁴ For there shall be no more any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. ²⁵ But I the LORD will speak the word which I will speak, and it will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, but in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it, says the Lord GOD."

²⁶ Again the word of the LORD came to me: ²⁷ "Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, 'The vision that he sees is for many days hence, and he prophesies of times far off.' ²⁸ Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: None of my words will be delayed any longer, but the word which I speak will be performed, says the Lord GOD."

13 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, prophesy" and say to those who prophesy out of their own minds: 'Hear the word of the LORD!' ³ Thus says the Lord GOD, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! ⁴ Your prophets have been like foxes among ruins, O Israel. ⁵ You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the day of the LORD. ⁶ They have spoken falsehood and divined a lie; they say, 'Says the LORD,' when the LORD has not sent them, and yet they expect him to fulfil their word. ⁷ Have you not seen a delusive vision, and

^s Gk Syr: Heb *they* ^t Gk Syr Tg: Heb *bring*

^u Gk Syr Tg: Heb *his help* ^v Heb *word*

^w Gk: Heb *who prophesy*

was captured (17.20), taken to Riblah and blinded (*may not see*, vv. 6,12; Jer.39.1-10). **14:** Seems to reflect 5.2,10,12. **15-16:** 14.21-23. **17-20:** The people's terror at the approaching invasion (4.9-11,16-17; Jer.4.19-21).

12.21-14.23: Of prophets and people. 21-28: A condemnation of the popular attitude that prophetic visions could be safely ignored (Hos.12.10; Jer.14.14-15; 23.28-29), and a correction of the impression that the fulfilment of prophecies of destruction such as those of Jeremiah was distant (Jer.5.12-13; 17.15). **27:** Compare Is.22.13; 1 Cor.15.32. **13.1-16:** Against false prophets. The absence of objective criteria (Jer.28.8-9) resulted in the perennial problem of identifying the true prophet (1 Kg. ch. 22; Mic.3.5; Is.9.15; Jer. chs. 14-15; with this passage, compare

uttered a lying divination, whenever you have said, 'Says the LORD,' although I have not spoken?"

8 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have uttered delusions and seen lies, therefore behold, I am against you, says the Lord GOD.

⁹ My hand will be against the prophets who see delusive visions and who give lying divinations; they shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord GOD. ¹⁰ Because, yea, because they have misled my people, saying, 'Peace,' when there is no peace; and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets daub it with whitewash; ¹¹ say to those who daub it with whitewash that it shall fall! There will be a deluge of rain,^x great hailstones will fall, and a stormy wind break out; ¹² and when the wall falls, will it not be said to you, 'Where is the daubing with which you daubed it?'

¹³ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: I will make a stormy wind break out in my wrath; and there shall be a deluge of rain in my anger, and great hailstones in wrath to destroy it. ¹⁴ And I will break down the wall that you have daubed with whitewash, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be laid bare; when it falls, you shall perish in the midst of it; and you shall know that I am the LORD.

¹⁵ Thus will I spend my wrath upon the wall, and upon those who have daubed it with whitewash; and I will say to you, The wall is no more, nor those who daubed it, ¹⁶ the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for

her, when there was no peace, says the Lord GOD.

17 "And you, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own minds; prophesy against them ¹⁸ and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the women who sew magic bands upon all wrists, and make veils for the heads of persons of every stature, in the hunt for souls! Will you hunt down souls belonging to my people, and keep other souls alive for your profit?

¹⁹ You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, putting to death persons who should not die and keeping alive persons who should not live, by your lies to my people, who listen to lies.

20 "Wherefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against your magic bands with which you hunt the souls,^y and I will tear them from your arms; and I will let the souls that you hunt go free^z like birds. ²¹ Your veils also I will tear off, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand as prey; and you shall know that I am the LORD. ²² Because you have disheartened the righteous falsely, although I have not disheartened him, and you have encouraged the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way to save his life; ²³ therefore you shall no more see delusive visions nor practice divination; I will deliver my people out of your hand. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

14 Then came certain of the elders of Israel to me, and sat before

^x Heb rain and you

^y Gk Syr: Heb souls for birds

^z Cn: Heb the souls

Jer.23.9-32). *Divination* (Ex.28.30; 1 Sam.28.6) played practically no role among the great prophets of Israel, but was common in contemporary non-Israelite prophetism, and apparently also in Israel. The false prophets' message (Jer. chs. 28-29) was like whitewash on a mud-brick wall (12.5) which provided no protection against the storm. 9: *Register*, Ezra ch. 2; Ex.32.32-33. 17-23: Against prophetesses. The reference here is to sorceresses and mediums (vv. 18,20; 1 Sam.28.7-25), who were probably outside the cult of Yahweh, which provided few opportunities for participation of women (Miriam, Ex.15.20; Deborah, Jg.4.4; Huldah, 2 Kg.22.14, are widely scattered Old Testament examples; compare 1 Cor.14.34). The significance of *magic bands* and *veils* is unknown. 14.1-11: Against idolators. Religious duplicity was so reprehensi-

me.² And the word of the LORD came to me:³ "Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces; should I let myself be inquired of at all by them?"

⁴ Therefore speak to them, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Any man of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him myself^a because of the multitude of his idols,⁵ that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel, who are all estranged from me through their idols.

⁶ "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: Repent and turn away from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.⁷ For any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, who separates himself from me, taking his idols into his heart and putting the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to a prophet to inquire for himself of me, I the LORD will answer him myself;⁸ and I will set my face against that man, I will make him a sign and a byword and cut him off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am the LORD.⁹ And if the prophet be deceived and speak a word, I, the LORD, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.¹⁰ And they shall bear their punishment—the punishment of the prophet and the punishment of the inquirer shall be alike—¹¹ that the house of

Israel may go no more astray from me, nor defile themselves any more with all their transgressions, but that they may be my people and I may be their God, says the Lord GOD."

¹² And the word of the LORD came to me:¹³ "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it, and break its staff of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast,¹⁴ even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, says the Lord GOD.¹⁵ If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no man may pass through because of the beasts;¹⁶ even if these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; they alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.¹⁷ Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Let a sword go through the land; and I cut off from it man and beast;¹⁸ though these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they alone would be delivered.¹⁹ Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast;²⁰ even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.

²¹ "For thus says the Lord GOD: How much more when I send upon Jerusalem my four sore acts of judg-

^a Cn Compare Tg: Heb uncertain

ble to God that God himself would punish anyone guilty of it. *Idols* translates Ezekiel's characteristic term "gillulim" (literally, "dung balls"), found thirty-nine times in Ezekiel, compared with nine times in the rest of the Old Testament. *Strangers* probably refers to proselytes who were considered equal with Israelites (47.22; Lev.17.8). **12-23:** Against false hopes. One would be saved only if he were righteous; righteousness is non-transferable and non-cumulative (33.12). Noah and Job are known in the Bible for their righteousness, as is Daniel. Ezekiel's reference to Daniel (see 28.3 n.), however, suggests the Canaanite Dan'el (so spelled in Ezekiel also) rather than the Biblical Daniel. There were undoubtedly cycles of literature associated with these patriarchs of which we now know very little.

ment, sword, famine, evil beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast! ²² Yet, if there should be left in it any survivors to lead out sons and daughters, when they come forth to you, and you see their ways and their doings, you will be consoled for the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, for all that I have brought upon it. ²³ They will console you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, says the Lord GOD."

15 And the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? ³ Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do men take a peg from it to hang any vessel on? ⁴ Lo, it is given to the fire for fuel; when the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything? ⁵ Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing; how much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything! ⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ⁷ And I will set my face against them; though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume them; and you will know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them. ⁸ And I will make the land desolate,

because they have acted faithlessly, says the Lord GOD."

16 Again the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations, ³ and say, Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite. ⁴ And as for your birth, on the day you were born your navel string was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor swathed with bands. ⁵ No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you; but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born.

⁶ "And when I passed by you, and saw you weltering in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live, ⁷ and grow up^b like a plant of the field.' And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full maidenhood;^c your breasts were formed, and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare.

⁸ "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, behold, you were at the age for love; and I spread my skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yea, I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord GOD, and you became mine. ⁹ Then I bathed you with

^b Gk Syr: Heb *I made you a myriad*

^c Cn: Heb *ornament of ornaments*

15.1-8: Allegory of the vine. Vines and vineyards are common figures (Jg.9.8-15; Is.5.1-7; Jer.2.21) but the reference to the *wood* is unique. The wood of the vine is good only when it produces satisfactorily; otherwise, even as fuel, it is practically useless. This is a figure for Judah; unproductive Judah must be destroyed (compare Jn.15.1-11).

16.1-63: The allegory of the unfaithful wife. 1-7: Jerusalem, the foundling. Ezekiel uses a folk-tale as an allegory. Jerusalem's ancestry was pagan and not related to the covenant. The *Canaanites* were the Semitic-speaking residents in Palestine before the Israelite invasion in the thirteenth century B.C., probably largely a part of the Amorite irruption into the Fertile Crescent in the early second millennium B.C. The *Hittites* were an Armenoid people living in Palestine with the Canaanites (Gen. ch. 23; Jos.3.10; compare 2 Sam.11.3). Unwanted and denied the common Palestinian amenities at birth, she, like female children in pagan antiquity, constituted a financial liability and was abandoned to die. By God's help, however, she grew into full maidenhood. 8-14: The maiden. She was adopted (by marriage) into God's covenant (compare 2 Sam.5.6-10) and became queen, receiving lavish adornment and generous nourishment

water and washed off your blood from you, and anointed you with oil. ¹⁰ I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with leather, I swathed you in fine linen and covered you with silk. ¹¹ And I decked you with ornaments, and put bracelets on your arms, and a chain on your neck. ¹² And I put a ring on your nose, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. ¹³ Thus you were decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered cloth; you ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful, and came to regal estate. ¹⁴ And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor which I had bestowed upon you, says the Lord God.

¹⁵ "But you trusted in your beauty, and played the harlot because of your renown, and lavished your harlotries on any passer-by. ¹⁶ You took some of your garments, and made for yourself gaily decked shrines, and on them played the harlot; the like has never been, nor ever shall be. ¹⁷ You also took your fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the harlot; ¹⁸ and you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set my oil and my incense before them. ¹⁹ Also my bread which I gave you—I fed you with fine flour and oil and honey—you set before them for a pleasing odor, says the Lord God.^d ²⁰ And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter ²¹ that you slaughtered my children

and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them? ²² And in all your abominations and your harlotries you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, weltering in your blood.

²³ "And after all your wickedness (woe, woe to you! says the Lord God), ²⁴ you built yourself a vaulted chamber, and made yourself a lofty place in every square; ²⁵ at the head of every street you built your lofty place and prostituted your beauty, offering yourself to any passer-by, and multiplying your harlotry. ²⁶ You also played the harlot with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, multiplying your harlotry, to provoke me to anger. ²⁷ Behold, therefore, I stretched out my hand against you, and diminished your allotted portion, and delivered you to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior. ²⁸ You played the harlot also with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; yea, you played the harlot with them, and still you were not satisfied. ²⁹ You multiplied your harlotry also with the trading land of Chaldea; and even with this you were not satisfied.

³⁰ "How lovesick is your heart, says the Lord God, seeing you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot; ³¹ building your vaulted chamber at the head of every street, and making your lofty place in every square. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned hire. ³² Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband! ³³ Men give gifts to all harlots; but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side for your harlotries.

d Syr: Heb and it was, says the Lord God

(Jerusalem in Israel's golden age under Solomon). **15-22:** The degenerate. The word *harlotries* is used here in a double sense, referring both to the actual practice of cult prostitution and to Jerusalem's unfaithfulness (Hos.4.13-14), which became widespread in the days of Manasseh (687-642 B.C.; 2 Kg.21.1-18) and Zedekiah (ch. 8). She used her *garments* to make shrines and on them indulged in her promiscuity (Am.2.7-8). She fashioned her jewelry into idols (Jg.8.24-27) and amulets. God's gifts were used as offerings to other gods. **23-34:** Jerusalem is condemned for her religious infidelity and her proclivity toward foreign alliances—a major cause of her degeneration. But she was worse than a common prostitute who is paid for her services;

³⁴ So you were different from other women in your harlotries: none solicited you to play the harlot; and you gave hire, while no hire was given to you; therefore you were different.

³⁵ "Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: ³⁶ Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your shame was laid bare and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotries with your lovers, and because of all your idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, ³⁷ therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers, with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you loathed; I will gather them against you from every side, and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. ³⁸ And I will judge you as women who break wedlock and shed blood are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. ³⁹ And I will give you into the hand of your lovers, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places; they shall strip you of your clothes and take your fair jewels, and leave you naked and bare. ⁴⁰ They shall bring up a host against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. ⁴¹ And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women; I will make you stop playing the harlot, and you shall also give hire no more. ⁴² So will I satisfy my fury on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you; I will be calm, and will no more be angry. ⁴³ Because you have not remembered the days of your youth, but have enraged me with all these things; therefore, behold, I will requite your deeds upon your head, says the Lord GOD.

"Have you not committed lewdness

in addition to all your abominations?

⁴⁴ Behold, every one who uses proverbs will use this proverb about you, 'Like mother, like daughter.' ⁴⁵ You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and her children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. ⁴⁶ And your elder sister is Sama'ria, who lived with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. ⁴⁷ Yet you were not content to walk in their ways, or do according to their abominations; within a very little time you were more corrupt than they in all your ways. ⁴⁸ As I live, says the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. ⁴⁹ Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them, when I saw it. ⁵¹ Sama'ria has not committed half your sins; you have committed more abominations than they, and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations which you have committed. ⁵² Bear your disgrace, you also, for you have made judgment favorable to your sisters; because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. So be ashamed, you also, and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous.

⁵³ "I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Sama'-

Jerusalem invited her lovers and paid them (Is.30.6; Hos. ch. 2; 8.9; Jer. chs. 2-3). **35-43:** Her lovers will turn against her and strip her. God himself will divorce her and expose her to be stoned (Dt.22.21,24). Her beauty will be destroyed and she will again find herself ignoble and ignored. **44-52:** This section expands on the preceding theme, showing Jerusalem to be so much worse than her "elder sister" *Samaria* and the "younger sister" *Sodom* (Jer.3.6-11), both of whom were destroyed, that they *appear righteous* by comparison. **53-63:** The revision of the oracle is manifest in the reference to *Edom* which occupied Judahite territory after 587 B.C.

ria and her daughters, and I will restore your own fortunes in the midst of them,⁵⁴ that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all that you have done, becoming a consolation to them.⁵⁵ As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and Sama'ria and her daughters shall return to their former estate; and you and your daughters shall return to your former estate.⁵⁶ Was not your sister Sodom a byword in your mouth in the day of your pride,⁵⁷ before your wickedness was uncovered? Now you have become like her^e an object of reproach for the daughters of Edom' and all her neighbors, and for the daughters of the Philistines, those round about who despise you.⁵⁸ You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, says the LORD.

59 "Yea, thus says the Lord God: I will deal with you as you have done, who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant,⁶⁰ yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish with you an everlasting covenant.⁶¹ Then you will remember your ways, and be ashamed when I^f take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you.⁶² I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD,⁶³ that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I forgive you all that you have done, says the Lord God."

¶ **7** The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, propound a riddle, and speak an allegory to the

house of Israel; ³ say, Thus says the Lord God: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar; ⁴ he broke off the topmost of its young twigs and carried it to a land of trade, and set it in a city of merchants.⁵ Then he took of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil; he placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig,⁶ and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine, and brought forth branches and put forth foliage.

7 "But there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage; and behold, this vine bent its roots toward him, and shot forth its branches toward him that he might water it. From the bed where it was planted ⁸ he transplanted it^h to good soil by abundant waters, that it might bring forth branches, and bear fruit, and become a noble vine.⁹ Say, Thus says the Lord God: Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its branches,ⁱ so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither? It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it from its roots.¹⁰ Behold, when it is transplanted, will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it—wither away on the bed where it grew?"

11 Then the word of the LORD came to me: ¹² "Say now to the rebellious house, Do you not know what these things mean? Tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took her king and her princes and brought them to him to Babylon.

^e Cn: Heb uncertain ^f Another reading is *Aram*
^g Syr: Heb you ^h Cn: Heb it was transplanted
ⁱ Cn: Heb fruit

All three will be restored (Jer.12.14–17) and a new covenant established (Jer.31.31–34). **62:** *I will establish my covenant* (see also v. 60), this phrase is characteristic of the "P" source in the Pentateuch (see Gen.6.18; 9.9,11; 17.7,19, etc.).

17.1–21: The allegory of the eagles. *Dramatis personae:* great eagle, Nebuchadrezzar; the top of the cedar, house of David (Jer.22.5–6,23); young twig, Jehoiachin; land of trade, Babylon; city of merchants, Babylon; seed of the land, Zedekiah; another eagle, Psammetichus II (594–588 B.C.), who engaged Zedekiah and other western states in anti-Babylonian intrigue (Jer. ch. 27). **5:** *Planted it*, i.e. made him king. **9:** Zedekiah will be unable long to resist Nebu-

¹³ And he took one of the seed royal and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath. (The chief men of the land he had taken away, ¹⁴ that the kingdom might be humble and not lift itself up, and that by keeping his covenant it might stand.) ¹⁵ But he rebelled against him by sending ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Can a man escape who does such things? Can he break the covenant and yet escape? ¹⁶ As I live, says the Lord God, surely in the place where the king dwells who made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant with him he broke, in Babylon he shall die. ¹⁷ Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company will not help him in war, when mounds are cast up and siege walls built to cut off many lives. ¹⁸ Because he despised the oath and broke the covenant, because he gave his hand and yet did all these things, he shall not escape. ¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord God: As I live, surely my oath which he despised, and my covenant which he broke, I will requite upon his head. ²⁰ I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there for the treason he has committed against me. ²¹ And all the pick^j of his troops shall fall by the sword, and the survivors shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken."

22 Thus says the Lord God: "I my-

self will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it out; I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain; ²³ on the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar; and under it will dwell all kinds of beasts;^k in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. ²⁴ And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it."

18 The word of the LORD came to me again: ² "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins shall die.

⁵ "If a man is righteous and does what is lawful and right— ⁶ if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of impurity, ⁷ does not oppress any one, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers

^j Another reading is *fugitives*
^k Gk: Heb lacks *all kinds of beasts*

chadrezzar (*the east wind*), though the siege lasted nineteen months (Jer. ch. 52). **17:** *Pharaoh* has been added either through editorial revision or scribal error; read, "and not with a mighty army . . . shall he [Nebuchadrezzar] deal with him . . ." (Jer.37.3-11). Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel felt that Zedekiah should honor his oath of fealty to Nebuchadrezzar; his revolt was seen as rebellion against God's design (Jer.27.6-7).

17.22-24: *Allegory of the cedar*, a messianic allegory. For similar imagery, see 31.1-9; for the Messiah as a *branch* compare Jer.23.5-6; Zech.3.8; *the lofty mountain*, Mount Zion (Mic.4.1).

18.1-32: *Individual responsibility*. **1-4:** It is human to blame someone else for one's plight; the exiles did this, blaming their fathers for their misfortunes (Jer.31.27-30), presumably based on the covenant provision in Ex.20.5. Ezekiel points out that the blame rests directly upon themselves. This discussion parallels the provision regarding three generations in Ex.20.5. **5-9:** First generation. *Eat upon the mountains*, sacred meals in pagan high places (6.1-14). The list includes moral and religious provisions; note the strong legalistic emphasis: if he is "careful

the naked with a garment,⁸ does not lend at interest or take any increase, withholds his hand from iniquity, executes true justice between man and man,⁹ walks in my statutes, and is careful to observe my ordinances¹—he is righteous, he shall surely live, says the Lord God.

10 “If he begets a son who is a robber, a shedder of blood,”¹¹ who does none of these duties, but eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor’s wife,¹² oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination,¹³ lends at interest, and takes increase; shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominable things; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.

14 “But if this man begets a son who sees all the sins which his father has done, and fears, and does not do likewise,¹⁵ who does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife,¹⁶ does not wrong any one, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment,¹⁷ withholds his hand from iniquity,¹⁸ takes no interest or increase, observes my ordinances, and walks in my statutes; he shall not die for his father’s iniquity; he shall surely live.¹⁸ As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.

19 “Yet you say, ‘Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?’ When the son has done what is lawful and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live.²⁰ The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the

iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

21 “But if a wicked man turns away from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.²² None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness which he has done he shall live.²³ Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?²⁴ But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity and does the same abominable things that the wicked man does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds which he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, he shall die.

25 “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?²⁶ When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die for it; for the iniquity which he has committed he shall die.²⁷ Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is lawful and right, he shall save his life.²⁸ Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

¹ Gk: Heb has kept my ordinances, to deal truly
^m Heb blood, and he does any one of these things
ⁿ Gk: Heb the poor

to observe my ordinances—he is righteous.” 10–13: Second generation. *Shedder of blood*, a murderer. A life opposite to that of his father is represented. 14–18: Third generation. Again a reversal from the father’s life. 19–20: Summation: neither the righteousness nor the iniquities of a previous generation are transferable to the next. 21–24: Within one’s life the same principle of non-extension pertains. 25–29: Objection to this principle is a misunderstanding of God’s

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin.^o 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."

19 And you, take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, ² and say:

- What a lioness was your mother among lions!
She couched in the midst of young lions,
rearing her whelps.
³ And she brought up one of her whelps;
he became a young lion,
and he learned to catch prey;
he devoured men.
⁴ The nations sounded an alarm against him;
he was taken in their pit;
and they brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt.
⁵ When she saw that she was baffled,^p
that her hope was lost,
she took another of her whelps
and made him a young lion.
⁶ He prowled among the lions;
he became a young lion,
and he learned to catch prey;
he devoured men.
⁷ And he ravaged their strongholds,^q
and laid waste their cities;
and the land was appalled and all who were in it
at the sound of his roaring.

- ⁸ Then the nations set against him snares^r on every side;
they spread their net over him;
he was taken in their pit.
⁹ With hooks they put him in a cage,
and brought him to the king of Babylon;
they brought him into custody,
that his voice should no more be heard
upon the mountains of Israel.
¹⁰ Your mother was like a vine in a vineyard^s
transplanted by the water,
fruitful and full of branches
by reason of abundant water.
¹¹ Its strongest stem became a ruler's scepter;
it towered aloft
among the thick boughs;
it was seen in its height
with the mass of its branches.
¹² But the vine was plucked up in fury,
cast down to the ground;
the east wind dried it up;
its fruit was stripped off,
its strong stem was withered;
the fire consumed it.
¹³ Now it is transplanted in the wilderness,
in a dry and thirsty land.
¹⁴ And fire has gone out from its stem,
has consumed its branches and fruit,
so that there remains in it no strong stem,
no scepter for a ruler.

This is a lamentation, and has become a lamentation.

^o Or so that they shall not be a stumbling block of iniquity to you. ^p Heb had waited

^q Tg Compare Theodotion: Heb knew his widows

^r Cn: Heb from the provinces

^s Cn: Heb in your blood

justice. 30-32: Because God is just, Israel's only hope is to repent and renew their covenant with him (v. 23; 36.24-32; Lam.3.33).

19.1-14: Two laments. 1-9: *The lioness* is Judah (Gen.49.9; symbol of Judah in 1 Kg.10.18-20 and found on Israelite seals). The first whelp is Jehoahaz, who was taken to Egypt (Jer. 22.10-12; 2 Kg.23.30-34). Jehoiachin, the second whelp, was exiled to Babylon (Jer.22.24-30; 2 Kg.24.8-16). Each reigned only three months and accomplished little, so the description should not be pressed. 10-14: *The vine* is Judah (Is.5.1-7; Jer.2.21). *The strongest stem* is Zedekiah (17.13) who was stripped (Jer.6.9) by the east wind (Nebuchadrezzar) and taken to Babylon (transplanted; Jer.52.1-11).

20 In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me. ² And the word of the LORD came to me: ³ "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God, Is it to inquire of me that you come? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you. ⁴ Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge them? Then let them know the abominations of their fathers, ⁵ and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the seed of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I swore to them, saying, I am the LORD your God. ⁶ On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands. ⁷ And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God. ⁸ But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not every man cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.

"Then I thought I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. ⁹ But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they dwelt, in whose sight I made myself known to them in

bringing them out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ So I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. ¹¹ I gave them my statutes and showed them my ordinances, by whose observance man shall live. ¹² Moreover I gave them my sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I the LORD sanctify them. ¹³ But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they did not walk in my statutes but rejected my ordinances, by whose observance man shall live; and my sabbaths they greatly profaned.

"Then I thought I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to make a full end of them. ¹⁴ But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. ¹⁵ Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands, ¹⁶ because they rejected my ordinances and did not walk in my statutes, and profaned my sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. ¹⁷ Nevertheless my eye spared them, and I did not destroy them or make a full end of them in the wilderness.

¹⁸ "And I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their ordinances, nor defile yourselves with their idols. ¹⁹ I the LORD am your God; walk in my statutes, and be careful to observe my ordinances, ²⁰ and hallow my sabbaths that they may be a sign between me and you,

20.1-44: The fall and rise of Israel (compare Ps. 106). **1-4:** Setting: August 14, 591 B.C. *Elders of the Exile*, 14.1-11. **5-8:** Apostasy in Egypt, where Israel served idols (Jos.24.14). There is some chronological confusion: God's promise to Israel was traditionally in a Palestinian setting (Gen.28.13-15); his revelation, *I am the LORD your God*, in the wilderness (Ex.20.2). **9-26:** Apostasy in the wilderness. *For the sake of my name* (36.22; Jer.14.7; Ps. 106.8) expresses the important concept that Israel's delivery from Egypt, the wilderness, and eventually from the Exile, was not accomplished because of Israel's intrinsic worth, but to demonstrate to all who would see that God is faithful and he alone is God (v. 44; Num.14.13-19). **12-13:** Of interest is the picture here of the institution of the *sabbath* in the wilderness period (Ex.31.13); compare the emphasis on the divine institution of the sabbath at creation in the "P" source in Genesis (Gen.2.1-3). The proper observance of the sabbath (see Jer.17.19-27 n.) became

that you may know that I the LORD am your God.²¹ But the children rebelled against me; they did not walk in my statutes, and were not careful to observe my ordinances, by whose observance man shall live; they profaned my sabbaths.

"Then I thought I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness.²² But I withheld my hand, and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out.²³ Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries,²⁴ because they had not executed my ordinances, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols.²⁵ Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life;²⁶ and I defiled them through their very gifts in making them offer by fire all their first-born, that I might horrify them; I did it that they might know that I am the LORD.

27 "Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: In this again your fathers blasphemed me, by dealing treacherously with me.²⁸ For when I had brought them into the land which I swore to give them, then wherever they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices and presented the provocation of their offering; there they sent up their soothing odors, and there they poured out their drink offerings.²⁹ (I said to them, What is the high place to which you go? So its name is called Bamah^t to this day.)³⁰ Wherefore

say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and go astray after their detestable things?³¹ When you offer your gifts and sacrifice your sons by fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.

32 "What is in your mind shall never happen—the thought, 'Let us be like the nations, like the tribes of the countries, and worship wood and stone.'

33 "As I live, says the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you.³⁴ I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out;³⁵ and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face.³⁶ As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, says the Lord God.³⁷ I will make you pass under the rod, and I will let you go in by number.³⁸ I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

39 "As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord God: Go serve every one of you his idols, now and

^t That is *High Place*

^u Gk: Heb *bring you into the bond of the covenant*

increasingly important in post-exilic Judaism (Mt.12.1-8; Jn.9.13-16). 25-26: This seems to contradict Jer.7.31, Lev.18.21, and the nature of God himself. One may interpret it as God's allowing his people to degenerate to this level so that they might conclusively learn his superiority to any man-made deity (Jer.19.4-6); these events, however, post-date the wilderness period. 27-29: Apostasy in Canaan. The emphasis is on the fertility cult associated with the high places (6.1-7; 16.15-22). 30-31: In view of their constant faithlessness, they should not presume to approach God now. 32-39: As in the Sinai wilderness (Num.14.13-25), the unfaithful will be purged in the Syrian wilderness. But Israel will be preserved as God's people.

hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols.

40 "For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord GOD, there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land; there I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred offerings. ⁴¹ As a pleasing odor I will accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. ⁴² And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country which I swore to give to your fathers. ⁴³ And there you shall remember your ways and all the doings with which you have polluted yourselves; and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed. ⁴⁴ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, says the Lord GOD."

45^v And the word of the LORD came to me: ⁴⁶ "Son of man, set your face toward the south, preach against the south, and prophesy against the forest land in the Negeb; ⁴⁷ say to the forest of the Negeb, Hear the word of the LORD: Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from south to north shall be scorched by it. ⁴⁸ All flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it; it shall not be

quenched." ⁴⁹ Then I said, "Ah Lord GOD! they are saying of me, 'Is he not a maker of allegories?'"

21^w The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries; prophesy against the land of Israel ³ and say to the land of Israel, Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am against you, and will draw forth my sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from you both righteous and wicked. ⁴ Because I will cut off from you both righteous and wicked, therefore my sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south to north; ⁵ and all flesh shall know that I the LORD have drawn my sword out of its sheath; it shall not be sheathed again. ⁶ Sigh therefore, son of man; sigh with breaking heart and bitter grief before their eyes. ⁷ And when they say to you, 'Why do you sigh?' you shall say, 'Because of the tidings. When it comes, every heart will melt and all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it comes and it will be fulfilled,' " says the Lord GOD.

8 And the word of the LORD came to me: ⁹ "Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord, Say:

A sword, a sword is sharpened
and also polished,

¹⁰ sharpened for slaughter,
polished to flash like lightning!

Or do we make mirth? You have despised the rod, my son, with everything of wood. ¹¹ So the sword is given to be polished, that it may be handled; it is sharpened and polished to be given into the hand of the slayer. ¹² Cry and wail, son of man, for it is against

^v Ch 21.1 in Heb ^w Ch 21.6 in Heb

40-44: After the new Exodus (Jer.23.7-8) God will restore his people to Zion (17.22-24) and their sacrifices will again be acceptable. (Ps.51.15-19).

20.45-49: Oracle against the south (i.e. Judah), which will be consumed by the invader from the north (Jer.5.14-17). One should read "south," not *Negeb*, in vv. 46-47.

21.1-32: Oracles on the sword, one of four conventional instruments of God's judgment (14.21; Is.34.5; Rev.6.8; compare 6.11 and Jeremiah's three, Jer.14.12; compare Jer.5.6). 1-7: God draws his sword. Because of its heterodoxy (*sanctuaries*; ch. 20), Judah (*all flesh*, v. 4) will be cut down; all men (*all flesh*, v. 5) will see the terrifying judgment (Jer.4.9). 8-17: Song of the sword (Jer.50.35-37). God's judgment is irrevocable. His flashing sword reaps its

my people; it is against all the princes of Israel; they are delivered over to the sword with my people. Smite therefore upon your thigh. ¹³ For it will not be a testing—what could it do if you despise the rod?" says the Lord God.

14 "Prophecy therefore, son of man; clap your hands and let the sword come down twice, yea thrice, the sword for those to be slain; it is the sword for the great slaughter, which encompasses them, ¹⁵ that their hearts may melt, and many fall at all their gates. I have given the glittering sword; ah! it is made like lightning, it is polished^x for slaughter. ¹⁶ Cut sharply to right^y and left where your edge is directed. ¹⁷ I also will clap my hands, and I will satisfy my fury; I the LORD have spoken."

18 The word of the LORD came to me again: ¹⁹ "Son of man, mark two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to come; both of them shall come forth from the same land. And make a signpost, make it at the head of the way to a city; ²⁰ mark a way for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites and to Judah and to^z Jerusalem the fortified. ²¹ For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he shakes the arrows, he consults the teraphim, he looks at the liver. ²² Into his right hand comes the lot for Jerusalem,^a to open the mouth with a cry,^b to lift up the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounds, to build siege towers. ²³ But to them it will seem like a false divination; they have sworn solemn oaths; but he brings their guilt to remembrance, that they may be captured.

24 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have made your guilt to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in them.^c ²⁵ And you, O unhallowed wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment, ²⁶ thus says the Lord God: Remove the turban, and take off the crown; things shall not remain as they are; exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. ²⁷ A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it; there shall not be even a trace^d of it until he comes whose right it is; and to him I will give it.

28 "And you, son of man, prophecy, and say, Thus says the Lord God concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; say, A sword, a sword is drawn for the slaughter, it is polished to glitter^e and to flash like lightning—²⁹ while they see for you false visions, while they divine lies for you—to be laid on the necks of the unhallowed wicked, whose day has come, the time of their final punishment. ³⁰ Return it to its sheath. In the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you. ³¹ And I will pour out my indignation upon you; I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath; and I will deliver you into the hands of brutal men, skilful to destroy. ³² You shall be fuel for the fire; your blood shall be in the midst of the land; you shall be no more remembered; for I the LORD have spoken."

^x Tg: Heb wrapped up

^y Gk Syr Vg: Heb right, set

^z Gk Syr: Heb in

^a Heb Jerusalem, to set battering rams

^b Gk: Heb with slaughter

^c Gk: Heb with the hand

^d Cn: Heb not even this

^e Cn: Heb to contain

grim toll across the land (6.3). 12: *Smite upon thy thigh*, a sign of mourning (Jer.31.19). 18–24: The sword of Nebuchadrezzar. Perhaps from Riblah (compare 2 Kg.25.6), Nebuchadrezzar determines which rebel to attack first by using divination: belomancy (i.e. casting of arrows with names of projected victims on the heads); consultation of teraphim, an oracular device the use of which is unclear (Hos.3.4); and hepatoscopy (analytical observation of the configurations and markings of sheep livers). The sword is about to fall—on Jerusalem! *Rabbah*, Ammonite capital (Jer.49.3). 25–27: The sword will cut down Zedekiah, Judah's king (Jer.21.7). 28–32: The sword against Ammon (v. 20). With familiar phraseology (compare v. 28 with v. 8), Judah's co-conspirators, the Ammonites, will also succumb to the sword of God's wrath (25.1–7). This

22 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² "And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then declare to her all her abominable deeds. ³ You shall say, Thus says the Lord GOD: A city that sheds blood in the midst of her, that her time may come, and that makes idols to defile herself! ⁴ You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and defiled by the idols which you have made; and you have brought your day near, the appointed time^f of your years has come. Therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations, and a mocking to all the countries. ⁵ Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you, you infamous one, full of tumult.

⁶ "Behold, the princes of Israel in you, every one according to his power, have been bent on shedding blood. ⁷ Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst; the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you. ⁸ You have despised my holy things, and profaned my sabbaths. ⁹ There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and men in you who eat upon the mountains; men commit lewdness in your midst. ¹⁰ In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they humble women who are unclean in their impurity. ¹¹ One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; another in you defiles his sister, his father's daughter. ¹² In you men take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and increase and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; and you

have forgotten me, says the Lord GOD.

¹³ "Behold, therefore, I strike my hands together at the dishonest gain which you have made, and at the blood which has been in the midst of you. ¹⁴ Can your courage endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you? I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it. ¹⁵ I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will consume your filthiness out of you. ¹⁶ And I^g shall be profaned through you in the sight of the nations; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

¹⁷ And the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸ "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them, silver^h and bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace, have become dross. ¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. ²⁰ As men gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire upon it in order to melt it; so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. ²¹ I will gather you and blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. ²² As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it; and you shall know that I the LORD have poured out my wrath upon you."

²³ And the word of the LORD came to me: ²⁴ "Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed,

^f Two Mss Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *until*

^g Gk Syr Vg: Heb *you*

^h Transposed from the end of the verse. Compare verse 20

oracle, as also vv. 18–24, may come from the time of the assassination of Gedaliah (Jer.40.13–41.18).

22.1–31: Oracles of indictment. 1–16: This writ of indictment contains a catalogue of sins (18.5–18) including idolatry (6.2–14; 14.3–5), injustice (18.12), violence (7.23), slander (Jer.6.28), adultery and fornication (18.6; Jer.3.1–4), and extortion—a list reminiscent of the regulations in the Holiness Code, Lev. chs. 17–26. In scorn and anger (*strike my hands together*, 6.11; 21.14,17) God will wreak punishment upon this *bloody city* (Nah.3.1, referring to Nineveh). **17–22:** The judgment will be like a smelter in which base metals are removed; so Judah must endure the rigorous refining process and be purified of her baseness (Is.1.22–25; Jer.6.27–30). **23–31:** This oracle seems to come after Jerusalem's fall (587 B.C.; v. 31) and describes Judah's sinfulness in

or rained upon in the day of indignation. ²⁵ Her princes¹ in the midst of her are like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her. ²⁶ Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. ²⁷ Her princes in the midst of her are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain. ²⁸ And her prophets have daubed for them with whitewash, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God,' when the LORD has not spoken. ²⁹ The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without redress. ³⁰ And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. ³¹ Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their way have I requited upon their heads, says the Lord God."

23 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, there were

two women, the daughters of one mother; ³ they played the harlot in Egypt; they played the harlot in their youth; there their breasts were pressed and their virgin bosoms handled. ⁴ Oho'lah was the name of the elder and Ohol'ibah the name of her sister. They became mine, and they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, Oho'lah is Sama'ria, and Ohol'ibah is Jerusalem.

⁵ "Oho'lah played the harlot while she was mine; and she doted on her lovers the Assyrians, ⁶ warriors clothed in purple, governors and commanders, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding on horses. ⁷ She bestowed her harlotries upon them, the choicest men of Assyria all of them; and she defiled herself with all the idols of every one on whom she doted. ⁸ She did not give up her harlotry which she had practiced since her days in Egypt; for in her youth men had lain with her and handled her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her. ⁹ Therefore I delivered her into the hands of her lovers, into the hands of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted. ¹⁰ These uncovered her nakedness; they seized her sons and her daughters; and her they slew with the sword; and she became a byword among women, when judgment had been executed upon her.

¹¹ "Her sister Ohol'ibah saw this, yet she was more corrupt than she in her doting and in her harlotry, which

i Gk: Heb a conspiracy of her prophets

retrospect. All classes of Judean society were corrupt (Jer.8.8-10): princes, priests (Jer.2.8; Zeph.3.4), nobles (Mic.7.3), prophets (13.10-16), and people (12.19); and all must be punished (Jer.6.27).

23.1-49: The allegory of the sisters, Oholah and Oholibah (compare ch. 16). **1-4: Introduction.** Israel's apostasy began in Egypt (20.5-9). The word-play *Oholah*, "she who has a tent" (i.e. Samaria), and *Oholibah*, "my tent [is] in her" (i.e. Jerusalem), suggests that though Samaria had a sanctuary (*tent*) THE sanctuary was in Jerusalem, thus emphasizing the enormity of Judah's apostasy. Or it may refer to the pagan sanctuaries (16.16) found in both lands. On the marrying of sisters, see Gen.31.41; Lev.18.18. **5-10: Oholah.** Like Hosea (8.9-10), Isaiah (7.1-9), and Jeremiah (4.30; same word for "lovers" in Ezek.23.9), Ezekiel viewed foreign alliances as disloyalty to God, though alternatives were not always politically available. Jehu (842-815 B.C.) surrendered to Shalmaneser III of Assyria; Jehoahaz (815-801) paid tribute to Adad-Nirari III, as did Menahem (745-738) to Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kg.15.19-29) and Hoshea (732-724) to Shalmaneser V (2 Kg.17.1-14). **11-21: Oholibah.** Judah, like Samaria, was tributary to Assyria, Ahaz (735-715 B.C.) to Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kg.16.7-9), Hezekiah (715-687)

was worse than that of her sister.

¹² She doted upon the Assyrians, governors and commanders, warriors clothed in full armor, horsemen riding on horses, all of them desirable young men. ¹³ And I saw that she was defiled; they both took the same way.

¹⁴ But she carried her harlotry further; she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chalde'ans portrayed in vermilion, ¹⁵ girded with belts on their loins, with flowing turbans on their heads, all of them looking like officers, a picture of Babylonians whose native land was Chaldea.

¹⁶ When she saw them she doted upon them, and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. ¹⁷ And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their lust; and after she was polluted by them, she turned from them in disgust. ¹⁸ When she carried on her harlotry so openly and flaunted her nakedness, I turned in disgust from her, as I had turned from her sister. ¹⁹ Yet she increased her harlotry, remembering the days of her youth, when she played the harlot in the land of Egypt ²⁰ and doted upon her paramours there, whose members were like those of asses, and whose issue was like that of horses. ²¹ Thus you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when the Egyptians^j handled your bosom and pressed^k your young breasts."

²² Therefore, O Ohol'ibah, thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I will rouse against you your lovers from whom you turned in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side: ²³ the Babylonians and all the Chalde'ans, Pekod and Sho'a and Ko'a, and all the Assyrians with them,

desirable young men, governors and commanders all of them, officers and warriors,^l all of them riding on horses.

²⁴ And they shall come against you from the north^m with chariots and wagons and a host of peoples; they shall set themselves against you on every side with buckler, shield, and helmet, and I will commit the judgment to them, and they shall judge you according to their judgments. ²⁵ And I will direct my indignation against you, that they may deal with you in fury. They shall cut off your nose and your ears, and your survivors shall fall by the sword. They shall seize your sons and your daughters, and your survivors shall be devoured by fire. ²⁶ They shall also strip you of your clothes and take away your fine jewels. ²⁷ Thus I will put an end to your lewdness and your harlotry brought from the land of Egypt; so that you shall not lift up your eyes to the Egyptians or remember them any more. ²⁸ For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will deliver you into the hands of those whom you hate, into the hands of those from whom you turned in disgust; ²⁹ and they shall deal with you in hatred, and take away all the fruit of your labor, and leave you naked and bare, and the nakedness of your harlotry shall be uncovered. Your lewdness and your harlotry ³⁰ have brought this upon you, because you played the harlot with the nations, and polluted yourself with their idols. ³¹ You have gone the way of your sister; therefore I will give her cup into your hand. ³² Thus says the Lord God:

^j Two Mss: Heb from Egypt

^k Cn: Heb for the sake of

^l Compare verses 6 and 12: Heb called

^m Gk: The meaning of the Hebrew word is unknown

to Sennacherib (2 Kg.18.1-36), and Manasseh (687-642) to Esarhaddon. Judah made alliances with Babylon; Hezekiah with Merodach-Baladan (2 Kg.20.12-21), Jehoiakim and Zedekiah with Nebuchadrezzar (2 Kg.24.1; compare Jer.22.18-23; 2 Kg.24.17; compare Jer.27.1-22) as well as with Egypt (Jer.2.18,36), and in both instances probably others not known to us (Hos. 7.11). The prophets' objections were based on the inherent, and demonstrated, dangers of syncretism and apostasy (2 Kg.16.7-19). **22-35:** Such faithlessness, religious and political, will be punished. *The Babylonians*, their Aramean mercenaries (*Pekod*, Jer.50.21; *Shoa* and *Koa*), and *Assyrian* auxiliaries will devastate the land (*strip you; leave you naked*). *From the north*, the usual invasion route from Mesopotamia into Palestine (Jer.4.6; 6.1; 25.9). The oracle of the cup

"You shall drink your sister's cup
which is deep and large;
you shall be laughed at and held in
derision,
for it contains much;
³³ you will be filled with drunkenness
and sorrow.

A cup of horror and desolation,
is the cup of your sister Sama'ria;
³⁴ you shall drink it and drain it out,
and pluck out your hair,"
and tear your breasts;

for I have spoken, says the Lord GOD.

³⁵ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
Because you have forgotten me and
cast me behind your back, therefore
bear the consequences of your lewd-
ness and harlotry."

36 The LORD said to me: "Son of
man, will you judge Oho'lah and
Ohol'ibah? Then declare to them their
abominable deeds. ³⁷ For they have
committed adultery, and blood is upon
their hands; with their idols they have
committed adultery; and they have
even offered up to them for food the
sons whom they had borne to me.

³⁸ Moreover this they have done to
me: they have defiled my sanctuary
on the same day and profaned my
sabbaths. ³⁹ For when they had
slaughtered their children in sacrifice
to their idols, on the same day they
came into my sanctuary to profane it.
And lo, this is what they did in my
house. ⁴⁰ They even sent for men to
come from far, to whom a messenger
was sent, and lo, they came. For them
you bathed yourself, painted your
eyes, and decked yourself with orna-
ments; ⁴¹ you sat upon a stately

couch, with a table spread before it
on which you had placed my incense
and my oil. ⁴² The sound of a care-
free multitude was with her; and with
men of the common sort drunkards^o
were brought from the wilderness; and
they put bracelets upon the hands of
the women, and beautiful crowns upon
their heads.

43 "Then I said, Do not men now
commit adultery^p when they practice
harlotry with her? ⁴⁴ For they have
gone in to her, as men go in to a harlot.
Thus they went in to Oho'lah and to
Ohol'ibah to commit lewdness.^q
⁴⁵ But righteous men shall pass judg-
ment on them with the sentence of
adulteresses, and with the sentence
of women that shed blood; because
they are adulteresses, and blood is upon
their hands."

46 For thus says the Lord GOD:
"Bring up a host against them, and
make them an object of terror and a
spoil. ⁴⁷ And the host shall stone them
and dispatch them with their swords;
they shall slay their sons and their
daughters, and burn up their houses.
⁴⁸ Thus will I put an end to lewdness
in the land, that all women may take
warning and not commit lewdness as
you have done. ⁴⁹ And your lewdness
shall be requited upon you, and you
shall bear the penalty for your sinful
idolatry; and you shall know that I am
the Lord GOD."

24 In the ninth year, in the tenth
month, on the tenth day of the
month, the word of the LORD came to

ⁿ Compare Syr: Heb *gnaw its sherds*

^o Heb uncertain

^p Compare Gk: Heb *obscure*

^q Gk: Heb *a woman of lewdness*

of wrath (vv. 32-34; Jer.25.15-29; Hab.2.16) assigns Samaria's fate to Jerusalem. **36-49:** As the adulteress is stoned (Lev.20.10), so the adultery (i.e. human sacrifice, pagan worship, profanation of the sabbath) of Samaria and Judah (Jer.4.30) has been and will be punished—with death.

24.1-27: The beginning of the end. 1-14: The allegory of the caldron (Jer.1.13-19) combines two themes (perhaps from two oracles). In the *caldron* (i.e. Jerusalem, 11.3-12) everyone, the good and bad (21.4; Mic.2.2-3), will be boiled as the besiegers heap wood (siege equipment) around it. The contents will be thoroughly boiled, the pot emptied (i.e. after the siege), and the bones burned (a reference to the sacking of the city). Verses 6 and 11 introduce the theme of corrosion, referring to Jerusalem's bloody past (22.2-12; Gen.4.10-11). Recalling the theme of refining (22.17-22), this corrosion must be burned out. **1:** The date of the oracle is January 15, 588 B.C.

me: ² "Son of man, write down the name of this day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day. ³ And utter an allegory to the rebellious house and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD:

Set on the pot, set it on,
pour in water also;
⁴ put in it the pieces of flesh,
all the good pieces, the thigh and
the shoulder;
fill it with choice bones.
⁵ Take the choicest one of the flock,
pile the logs^r under it;
boil its pieces,^s
seethe^t also its bones in it.

⁶ "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose rust is in it, and whose rust has not gone out of it! Take out of it piece after piece, without making any choice."^u ⁷ For the blood she has shed is still in the midst of her; she put it on the bare rock, she did not pour it upon the ground to cover it with dust.
⁸ To rouse my wrath, to take vengeance, I have set on the bare rock the blood she has shed, that it may not be covered. ⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great. ¹⁰ Heap on the logs, kindle the fire, boil well the flesh, and empty out the broth,^v and let the bones be burned up. ¹¹ Then set it empty upon the coals, that it may become hot, and its copper may burn, that its filthiness may be melted in it, its rust consumed. ¹² In vain I have wearied myself;^w its thick rust does not go out of it by fire. ¹³ Its rust is your filthy lewdness. Because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your filthiness, you shall not be cleansed any more till I have satisfied my fury upon you. ¹⁴ I the LORD have spoken; it shall come to pass, I will do it; I will not go back, I will not spare, I will not repent; accord-

ing to your ways and your doings I will judge you, says the Lord GOD."

¹⁵ Also the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁶ "Son of man, behold, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep nor shall your tears run down. ¹⁷ Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban, and put your shoes on your feet; do not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of mourners^x."
¹⁸ So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died. And on the next morning I did as I was commanded.

¹⁹ And the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things mean for us, that you are acting thus?"
²⁰ Then I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me: ²¹ 'Say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the desire of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword. ²² And you shall do as I have done; you shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of mourners.^x ²³ Your turbans shall be on your heads and your shoes on your feet; you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall pine away in your iniquities and groan to one another. ²⁴ Thus shall Ezekiel be to you a sign; according to all that he has done you shall do. When this comes, then you will know that I am the Lord GOD.'

²⁵ "And you, son of man, on the day when I take from them their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes and their heart's desire, and also their sons and daughters,

^r Compare verse 10: Heb *the bones*

^s Two Mss: Heb *its boilings*

^t Cn: Heb *its bones seethe*

^u Heb *no lot has fallen upon it*

^v Compare Gk: Heb *mix the spices*

^w Cn: Heb uncertain ^x Vg Tg: Heb *men*

24.15-27: Oracle at the death of Ezekiel's wife. Ezekiel was instructed to forego the customary rites of mourning (Jer.16.5-9; Mic.1.8) as a sign to the people that the loss of cherished persons and things would bring a numbing, inexpressible grief (compare Jer.16.1-4). **25-27:** When word of the fall of Jerusalem reached Ezekiel (33.21-22), his tongue would be loosed (3.24-27), and he would proclaim a new message.

²⁶ on that day a fugitive will come to you to report to you the news. ²⁷ On that day your mouth will be opened to the fugitive, and you shall speak and be no longer dumb. So you will be a sign to them; and they will know that I am the LORD."

25 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face toward the Ammonites, and prophesy against them. ³ Say to the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD: Thus says the Lord GOD, Because you said, 'Aha!' over my sanctuary when it was profaned, and over the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and over the house of Judah when it went into exile; ⁴ therefore I am handing you over to the people of the East for a possession, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings in your midst; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. ⁵ I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and the cities of the Ammonites^y a fold for flocks. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ⁶ For thus says the Lord GOD: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the malice within you against the land of Israel, ⁷ therefore, behold, I have stretched out my hand against you, and will hand you over as spoil to the nations; and I will cut you off from the peoples and will make you perish out of the countries; I will destroy you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

8 "Thus says the Lord GOD: Be-

cause Moab^z said, Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations, ⁹ therefore I will lay open the flank of Moab from the cities^a on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth-jesh'imoth, Ba'al-me'on, and Kiriatha'im. ¹⁰ I will give it along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession, that it^b may be remembered no more among the nations, ¹¹ and I will execute judgments upon Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

12 "Thus says the Lord GOD: Because Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended in taking vengeance upon them, ¹³ therefore thus says the Lord GOD, I will stretch out my hand against Edom, and cut off from it man and beast; and I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall by the sword. ¹⁴ And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel; and they shall do in Edom according to my anger and according to my wrath; and they shall know my vengeance, says the Lord GOD.

15 "Thus says the Lord GOD: Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of heart to destroy in never-ending enmity; ¹⁶ therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cher'ethites, and destroy the rest of the seacoast. ¹⁷ I will

^y Cn: Heb lacks *the cities of*
^z Gk Old Latin: Heb *Moab and Seir*
^a Heb *cities from its cities*
^b Cn: Heb *the Ammonites*

25.1-32.32: Oracles against the nations. Compare Is. chs. 13-23; Jer. chs. 46-51. Seven nations (Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt; compare Dt.7.1) will be punished before Israel is restored (36.5-7).

25.1-17: Oracles against Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia. 1-7: Against Ammon (21.28-32; Am.1.13-15; Jer.49.1-6). Ammon, which had seized one-time Israelite territory (Jer.49.1), is to be occupied by *the people of the East* (Is.11.14), i.e. Arab tribes, whose expansion during this period pushed the Edomites into southern Judah (vv. 12-14). This Arab expansion eventually produced the Nabatean empire (compare 2 Cor.11:32). **8-11: Against Moab.** Compare Jer.48.1-47. The Arab expansion would also envelop Moab. **12-14: Against Edom.** Compare Is. ch. 34; Jer.49.7-22. **15-17: Against Philistia.** Compare Jer. ch. 47. *The Cherethites*, who lived between Gerar and Sharuhén (1 Sam.30.14), were perhaps originally Cretans (Jer. 47.4).

execute great vengeance upon them with wrathful chastisements. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance upon them."

26 In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken, it has swung open to me; I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste,' ³ therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. ⁴ They shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers; and I will scrape her soil from her, and make her a bare rock. ⁵ She shall be in the midst of the sea a place for the spreading of nets; for I have spoken, says the Lord GOD; and she shall become a spoil to the nations; ⁶ and her daughters on the mainland shall be slain by the sword. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

⁷ "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers. ⁸ He will slay with the sword your daughters on the mainland; he will set up a siege wall against you, and throw up a mound against you, and raise a roof of shields against you. ⁹ He will direct the shock of his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. ¹⁰ His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you;

your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen and wagons and chariots, when he enters your gates as one enters a city which has been breached.

¹¹ With the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people with the sword; and your mighty pillars will fall to the ground. ¹² They will make a spoil of your riches and a prey of your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters. ¹³ And I will stop the music of your songs, and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more. ¹⁴ I will make you a bare rock; you shall be a place for the spreading of nets; you shall never be rebuilt; for I the LORD have spoken, says the Lord GOD.

¹⁵ "Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in the midst of you? ¹⁶ Then all the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones, and remove their robes, and strip off their embroidered garments; they will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit upon the ground and tremble every moment, and be appalled at you. ¹⁷ And they will raise a lamentation over you, and say to you,

'How you have vanished^c from the seas,

O city renowned,
that was mighty on the sea,
you and your inhabitants,

^c Gk Old Latin Aquila: Heb *vanished*, O *inhabited one*,

26.1-28.19: Oracles against Tyre. 26.1-21: Tyre is to be destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar. Note the four divisions of the oracle, each with the introductory "Thus says the Lord God" (vv. 3,7,15,19). **26.1-6:** Announcement of the judgment. For its failure to aid its ally Jerusalem (Jer.27.3), and because of its inordinate pride (28.2-10), Tyre is to fall. **4: Rock**, in Hebrew a play on the word "Tyre," which could also be read as "rock." **7-14:** With mighty siege works, Nebuchadrezzar will besiege the city, which lay a half mile off-shore on an island, and he will occupy its suburbs (*daughters*) on the mainland. Nebuchadrezzar's thirteen-year siege of Tyre apparently began shortly after Jerusalem's fall (*the eleventh year* of v. 1 should perhaps be read "the twelfth year" with the Septuagint; namely 586 B.C.), and ended in a negotiated settlement (29.18). Tyre finally fell to Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. **14:** Compare vv. 4-5. **15-18:** Lamentation of the *princes of the sea*, perhaps cities in trade alliance with Tyre. **19-21:**

who imposed your terror
on all the mainland!^d

¹⁸ Now the isles tremble
on the day of your fall;
yea, the isles that are in the sea
are dismayed at your passing.^e

¹⁹ "For thus says the Lord God:
When I make you a city laid waste,
like the cities that are not inhabited,
when I bring up the deep over you,
and the great waters cover you,²⁰ then
I will thrust you down with those who
descend into the Pit, to the people of
old, and I will make you to dwell in
the nether world, among primeval
ruins, with those who go down to the
Pit, so that you will not be inhabited
or have a place^e in the land of the
living. ²¹ I will bring you to a dread-
ful end, and you shall be no more;
though you be sought for, you will
never be found again, says the Lord
God."

27 The word of the LORD came to
me: ² "Now you, son of man,
raise a lamentation over Tyre, ³ and
say to Tyre, who dwells at the entrance
to the sea, merchant of the peoples on
many coastlands, thus says the Lord
God:

"O Tyre, you have said,
'I am perfect in beauty.'

⁴ Your borders are in the heart of
the seas;
your builders made perfect your
beauty.

⁵ They made all your planks
of fir trees from Senir;
they took a cedar from Lebanon

to make a mast for you.

⁶ Of oaks of Bashan
they made your oars;
they made your deck of pines
from the coasts of Cyprus,
inlaid with ivory.

⁷ Of fine embroidered linen from
Egypt
was your sail,
serving as your ensign;
blue and purple from the coasts of
Eli'shah

was your awning.

⁸ The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad
were your rowers;
skilled men of Zemer^f were in you,
they were your pilots.

⁹ The elders of Gebal and her skilled
men were in you,
caulking your seams;
all the ships of the sea with their
mariners were in you,
to barter for your wares.

¹⁰ "Persia and Lud and Put were in
your army as your men of war; they
hung the shield and helmet in you;
they gave you splendor. ¹¹ The men of
Arvad and Helech^g were upon your
walls round about, and men of Gamad
were in your towers; they hung their
shields upon your walls round about;
they made perfect your beauty.

¹² "Tarshish trafficked with you
because of your great wealth of every
kind; silver, iron, tin, and lead they
exchanged for your wares. ¹³ Javan,

^d Cn: Heb *her inhabitants*

^e Gk: Heb *I will give beauty*

^f Compare Gen 10.18: Heb *your skilled men, O Tyre*
^g Or *and your army*

The waters of the primordial deep (Gen.1.2) will cover the wasted city, which will *descend into the Pit* (Sheol, see 31.15–18; Is.14.15), the abode of the dead.

27.1–36: Lamentation over Tyre. The good ship Tyre was constructed of the best materials (*I am perfect*; compare 28.2–10). Royal purple dye was the chief export product of Phoenicia; the word "Phoenicia" comes from the Greek word for "purple" (the word "Canaan" also means "purple"). *Senir* is Mount Hermon (Dt.3.9). *Bashan* is east of the Sea of Galilee. *Elishah* is probably Cyprus. *Arvad*, like Tyre, was an island city, two miles off-shore. *Gebal* was later known as Byblos. **10–25a:** A prose intrusion into the lament over Tyre. **10–11:** Tyre's mercenaries included men from *Lud*, usually identified with Lydia in Asia Minor (Gen.10.13), but see 30.1–5 n. *Put*, perhaps Cyrene, east of Libya (30.5). *Helech*, possibly Cilicia. The identity of *Gamad* is uncertain; perhaps the word should be read Gomerim, i.e. the Cimmerians in Cappadocia. **12–25a:** Tyre's commercial empire is described generally from west to east (*Tarshish*, see Jer.10.9 n.; *Jawan*, Ionians, i.e. Greeks, Gen.10.2; *Tubal* and *Meshech*, see

Tubal, and Meshech traded with you; they exchanged the persons of men and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. ¹⁴ Beth-togar'mah exchanged for your wares horses, war horses, and mules. ¹⁵ The men of Rhodes^h traded with you; many coastlands were your own special markets, they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony. ¹⁶ Edomⁱ trafficked with you because of your abundant goods; they exchanged for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral, and agate. ¹⁷ Judah and the land of Israel traded with you; they exchanged for your merchandise wheat, olives and early figs,^j honey, oil, and balm. ¹⁸ Damascus trafficked with you for your abundant goods, because of your great wealth of every kind; wine of Helbon, and white wool, ¹⁹ and wine^k from Uzal they exchanged for your wares; wrought iron, cassia, and calamus were bartered for your merchandise. ²⁰ Dedan traded with you in saddlecloths for riding. ²¹ Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams, and goats; in these they trafficked with you. ²² The traders of Sheba and Ra'amah traded with you; they exchanged for your wares the best of all kinds of spices, and all precious stones, and gold. ²³ Haran, Canneh, Eden,^l Asshur, and Chilmad traded with you. ²⁴ These traded with you in choice garments, in clothes of blue and embroidered work, and in carpets of colored stuff, bound with cords and made secure; in these they traded with you.^m ²⁵ The ships of Tarshish traveled for you with your merchandise.ⁿ

"So you were filled and heavily laden
in the heart of the seas.

- ²⁶ Your rowers have brought you out into the high seas.
The east wind has wrecked you in the heart of the seas.
- ²⁷ Your riches, your wares, your merchandise,
your mariners and your pilots,
your caulkers, your dealers in merchandise,
and all your men of war who are in you,
with all your company
that is in your midst,
sink into the heart of the seas
on the day of your ruin.
- ²⁸ At the sound of the cry of your pilots
the countryside shakes,
²⁹ and down from their ships
come all that handle the oar.
The mariners and all the pilots of the sea
stand on the shore
³⁰ and wail aloud over you,
and cry bitterly.
They cast dust on their heads
and wallow in ashes;
³¹ they make themselves bald for you,
and gird themselves with sackcloth,
and they weep over you in bitterness of soul,
with bitter mourning.
- ³² In their wailing they raise a lamentation for you,
and lament over you:
'Who was ever destroyed^o like Tyre
in the midst of the sea?
- ³³ When your wares came from the seas,
you satisfied many peoples;

^h Gk: Heb *Dedan* ⁱ Another reading is *Aram*

^j Cn: Heb *wheat of minnith and pannag*

^k Gk: Heb *Vedan and Javan*

^l Cn: Heb *Eden the traders of Sheba*

^m Cn: Heb *in your market*

ⁿ Cn: Heb *your travelers your merchandise*

^o Tg Vg: Heb *like silence*

38.1-9 n.; *Beth-togarmah*, see 38.1-9 n.), from south to north (*Helbon*, famed wine center thirteen miles north of Damascus), from southwest to northeast (*Uzal*, modern Sana in Yemen; *Dedan*, in west central Arabia; *Sheba*, in southwest Arabia; *Haran*, on the Balikh River in Mesopotamia, Gen.11.31-32; *Eden*, in Assyrian records Bit-Adini, the Beth-eden of Am.1.5, and *Canneh* southeast of Haran; *Asshur*, south of Nineveh; *Chilmad*, an unidentified Mesopotamian city). *Calamus*, sweet cane (Jer.6.20), was used for oil and sacrifice. **25b-36**: This section continues vv. 1-9. The sinking of the ship by the *east wind* (19.12; Jer.18.17). The sudden

with your abundant wealth and
merchandise
you enriched the kings of the
earth.

³⁴ Now you are wrecked by the seas,
in the depths of the waters;
your merchandise and all your crew
have sunk with you.

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the coastlands
are appalled at you;
and their kings are horribly afraid,
their faces are convulsed.

³⁶ The merchants among the peoples
hiss at you;
you have come to a dreadful end
and shall be no more for ever.' ”

28 The word of the LORD came
to me: ² “Son of man, say to
the prince of Tyre, Thus says the
Lord God:

“Because your heart is proud,
and you have said, ‘I am a god,
I sit in the seat of the gods,
in the heart of the seas,’
yet you are but a man, and no god,
though you consider yourself as
wise as a god—

³ you are indeed wiser than Daniel;
no secret is hidden from you;

⁴ by your wisdom and your
understanding
you have gotten wealth for
yourself,
and have gathered gold and silver
into your treasuries;

⁵ by your great wisdom in trade
you have increased your wealth,
and your heart has become proud
in your wealth—

⁶ therefore thus says the Lord God:
“Because you consider yourself
as wise as a god,

⁷ therefore, behold, I will bring
strangers upon you,
the most terrible of the nations;
and they shall draw their swords
against the beauty of your
wisdom
and defile your splendor.

⁸ They shall thrust you down into the
Pit,
and you shall die the death of the
slain
in the heart of the seas.

⁹ Will you still say, ‘I am a god,’
in the presence of those who slay
you,
though you are but a man, and no
god,
in the hands of those who wound
you?

¹⁰ You shall die the death of the
uncircumcised
by the hand of foreigners;
for I have spoken, says the Lord
God.”

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD
came to me: ¹² “Son of man, raise a
lamentation over the king of Tyre, and
say to him, Thus says the Lord God:
“You were the signet of perfection,”
full of wisdom
and perfect in beauty.

¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of
God;
every precious stone was your
covering,
carnelian, topaz, and jasper,
chrysolite, beryl, and onyx,
sapphire,^a carbuncle, and emerald;
and wrought in gold were your
settings

p Heb obscure
q Or lapis lazuli

end of the great commercial city brings fear and lamentation to seamen, merchants, and inhabitants of the coastlands.

28.1–10: Oracle against Tyre, apparently using mythological themes, including the Canaanite story of Dan’el (see 14.12–23 n.) in which Dan’el is the wise judge of widows and orphans. Pride leads one to regard himself as God. Thus the prince of Tyre sat *in the seat of the gods* (compare Is.14.13–14); but he will be slain by *the most terrible of the nations*, Babylonia (30.10–11), and come to an ignominious end (*the death of the uncircumcized*) in Sheol (31.14–18).

28.11–19: Lamentation over the king of Tyre, based on a variant version of the Eden story. Man, created as a perfect being, dwelt in Eden, with a covering of precious stones (compare the twelve precious stones of the ephod in Ex.28.17–20 and the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev.4.1–6; 21.15–21). But pride and idolatry caused his banishment by the guardian

- and your engravings.^r
 On the day that you were created
 they were prepared.
¹⁴ With an anointed guardian cherub
 I placed you;^s
 you were on the holy mountain of
 God;
 in the midst of the stones of fire
 you walked.
¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways
 from the day you were created,
 till iniquity was found in you.
¹⁶ In the abundance of your trade
 you were filled with violence, and
 you sinned;
 so I cast you as a profane thing from
 the mountain of God,
 and the guardian cherub drove you
 out
 from the midst of the stones of fire.
¹⁷ Your heart was proud because of
 your beauty;
 you corrupted your wisdom for
 the sake of your splendor.
 I cast you to the ground;
 I exposed you before kings,
 to feast their eyes on you.
¹⁸ By the multitude of your iniquities,
 in the unrighteousness of your
 trade
 you profaned your sanctuaries;
 so I brought forth fire from the midst
 of you;
 it consumed you,
 and I turned you to ashes upon the
 earth
 in the sight of all who saw you.
¹⁹ All who know you among the
 peoples
 are appalled at you;
 you have come to a dreadful end
 and shall be no more for ever.”
²⁰ The word of the LORD came to
 me: ²¹ “Son of man, set your face to-

ward Sidon, and prophesy against her
²² and say, Thus says the Lord GOD:
 “Behold, I am against you, O Sidon,
 and I will manifest my glory in
 the midst of you.

And they shall know that I am the
 LORD
 when I execute judgments in her,
 and manifest my holiness in her;
²³ for I will send pestilence into her,
 and blood into her streets;
 and the slain shall fall in the midst
 of her,
 by the sword that is against her on
 every side.

Then they will know that I am the
 LORD.

²⁴ “And for the house of Israel
 there shall be no more a brier to prick
 or a thorn to hurt them among all their
 neighbors who have treated them with
 contempt. Then they will know that
 I am the Lord God.

²⁵ “Thus says the Lord GOD: When
 I gather the house of Israel from the
 peoples among whom they are scat-
 tered, and manifest my holiness in
 them in the sight of the nations, then
 they shall dwell in their own land which
 I gave to my servant Jacob. ²⁶ And
 they shall dwell securely in it, and they
 shall build houses and plant vineyards.
 They shall dwell securely, when I exe-
 cute judgments upon all their neighbors
 who have treated them with contempt.
 Then they will know that I am the LORD
 their God.”

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth
 month, on the twelfth day of the
 month, the word of the LORD came to
 me: ² “Son of man, set your face against
 Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy
 against him and against all Egypt;

^r Heb uncertain ^s Heb uncertain

cherub (Gen.3.24). **16:** *The mountain of God* in Canaanite myth was Mount Sapon, modern Jebel Aqra', north of Ugarit.

28.20-23: Oracle against Sidon, south of Tyre, an ally of Jerusalem against Nebuchadrezzar (Jer.27.3). **22-23:** Compare 20.41; 36.23.

28.24-26: Restoration of Israel. An editorial addition, concluding the first section of the oracles concerning foreign nations. **24:** Compare Num.33.55. **25-26:** Compare 34.28; Jer. 23.6; Lev.25.19.

29.1-32.32: Against Egypt. **29.1-16:** Against Pharaoh (January 7, 587 B.C.). Hophra's attack against Nebuchadrezzar in the spring of 588 had failed to relieve Jerusalem (vv. 6-9;

³ speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God:

“Behold, I am against you,
Pharaoh king of Egypt,
the great dragon that lies
in the midst of his streams,
that says, ‘My Nile is my own;
I made it.’”

⁴ I will put hooks in your jaws,
and make the fish of your streams
stick to your scales;
and I will draw you up out of the
midst of your streams,
with all the fish of your streams
which stick to your scales.

⁵ And I will cast you forth into the
wilderness,
you and all the fish of your
streams;
you shall fall upon the open field,
and not be gathered and buried.
To the beasts of the earth and to the
birds of the air
I have given you as food.

⁶ “Then all the inhabitants of Egypt
shall know that I am the LORD. Because
you” have been a staff of reed to the
house of Israel; ⁷ when they grasped
you with the hand, you broke, and tore
all their shoulders; and when they
leaned upon you, you broke, and made
all their loins to shake;” ⁸ therefore
thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will
bring a sword upon you, and will cut
off from you man and beast; ⁹ and the
land of Egypt shall be a desolation and
a waste. Then they will know that I am
the LORD.

“Because you” said, ‘The Nile is
mine, and I made it,’ ¹⁰ therefore, be-
hold, I am against you, and against your
streams, and I will make the land of
Egypt an utter waste and desolation,

from Migdol to Syene, as far as the
border of Ethiopia. ¹¹ No foot of man
shall pass through it, and no foot of
beast shall pass through it; it shall be
uninhabited forty years. ¹² And I will
make the land of Egypt a desolation in
the midst of desolated countries; and
her cities shall be a desolation forty
years among cities that are laid waste. I
will scatter the Egyptians among the na-
tions, and disperse them among the
countries.

¹³ “For thus says the Lord God:
At the end of forty years I will gather
the Egyptians from the peoples among
whom they were scattered; ¹⁴ and I
will restore the fortunes of Egypt, and
bring them back to the land of Pathros,
the land of their origin; and there they
shall be a lowly kingdom. ¹⁵ It shall
be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and
never again exalt itself above the na-
tions; and I will make them so small
that they will never again rule over the
nations. ¹⁶ And it shall never again be
the reliance of the house of Israel, re-
calling their iniquity, when they turn to
them for aid. Then they will know that
I am the Lord God.”

¹⁷ In the twenty-seventh year,
in the first month, on the first day of
the month, the word of the LORD came
to me: ¹⁸ “Son of man, Nebuchadrez-
zar king of Babylon made his army la-
bor hard against Tyre; every head was
made bald and every shoulder was
rubbed bare; yet neither he nor his army
got anything from Tyre to pay for the
labor that he had performed against
it. ¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord
God: Behold, I will give the land of

ⁱ Syr Compare Gk: Heb I have made myself

^u Gk Syr Vg: Heb they

^v Syr: Heb stand ^w Gk Syr Vg: Heb he

Jer.37.1–10). Hophra is depicted as the great sea dragon (Hebrew “tannin”; Is.27.1; Job ch. 41) whom God will catch and let his body become carrion (32.1–8). *His streams*, the Nile delta and canals. *Fish of your streams*, the Egyptians and their mercenaries. ¹⁰: *Migdol* (southwest of Pelusium, 30.15; Jer.44.1) and *Syene* (Aswan, at the First Cataract of the Nile) are the northern and southern limits of Egypt. ¹¹: *Forty years*, 4.6; Num.14.33. ¹⁴: *Pathros*, see Jer.44.1 n.

^{29.17–21}: Egypt as “wages” for Nebuchadrezzar. This is Ezekiel’s latest dated oracle, April 26, 571 B.C., shortly after Ahmosis II forced Hophra to make him co-regent. Nebuchadrezzar will get sufficient booty from Egypt to compensate for his lack of booty from the siege of Tyre (26.7; Jer.46.2–26). *Horn* may refer to the re-establishment of the Davidic line in Israel (Ps.132.17).

Egypt to Nebuchadrez'zar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth^x and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army. ²⁰ I have given him the land of Egypt as his recompense for which he labored, because they worked for me, says the Lord God.

²¹ "On that day I will cause a horn to spring forth to the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

30 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord God:

"Wail, 'Alas for the day!'"

³ For the day is near,
the day of the LORD is near;
it will be a day of clouds,
a time of doom for the nations.

⁴ A sword shall come upon Egypt,
and anguish shall be in Ethiopia,
when the slain fall in Egypt,
and her wealth is carried away,
and her foundations are torn
down.

⁵ Ethiopia, and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya,^y and the people of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

⁶ "Thus says the LORD:
Those who support Egypt shall fall,
and her proud might shall come
down;
from Migdol to Syene
they shall fall within her by the
sword,
says the Lord God.

⁷ And she^z shall be desolated in the
midst of desolated countries
and her cities shall be in the midst
of cities that are laid waste.

⁸ Then they will know that I am the
LORD,
when I have set fire to Egypt,
and all her helpers are broken.

⁹ "On that day swift^a messengers
shall go forth from me to terrify the
unsuspecting Ethiopians; and anguish
shall come upon them on the day of
Egypt's doom; for, lo, it comes!

¹⁰ "Thus says the Lord God:
I will put an end to the wealth^b of
Egypt,
by the hand of Nebuchadrez'zar
king of Babylon.

¹¹ He and his people with him, the
most terrible of the nations,
shall be brought in to destroy the
land;

and they shall draw their swords
against Egypt,
and fill the land with the slain.

¹² And I will dry up the Nile,
and will sell the land into the hand
of evil men;

I will bring desolation upon the land
and everything in it,
by the hand of foreigners;
I, the LORD, have spoken.

¹³ "Thus says the Lord God:
I will destroy the idols,
and put an end to the images, in
Memphis;
there shall no longer be a prince in
the land of Egypt;
so I will put fear in the land of
Egypt.

¹⁴ I will make Pathros a desolation,
and will set fire to Zo'an,
and will execute acts of judgment
upon Thebes.

^x Or multitude ^y Gk Compare Syr Vg: Heb *Cub*
^z Gk: Heb they ^a Gk Syr: Heb in ships
^b Or multitude

30.1-26: The doom of Egypt. 1-5: The day of the LORD since the time of Amos (Am.5.18-20) was God's judgment day (15.5; Is.2.12; Jer.30.7; Zeph.1.14-18); later it became the day of Israel's restoration and remained doomsday for the Gentiles. *Sword*, 21.3-17. *Put*, see 27.10-11 n. Because of its regular juxtaposition with Put (27.10; 38.5; [with Cush (Ethiopia)]; Is.66.19), *Lud* is probably not Lydia in Asia Minor, but should be sought in northeast Africa. 6-9: Egypt's mercenaries (27.10-11) will collapse before the onslaught; Egypt will be reduced to ashes (28.18). *Migdol* to *Syene*, see 29.10 n. 10-12: Nebuchadrezzar (26.7), king of the most terrible of the nations (28.7), is God's instrument (Jer.27.6). 13-19: All Egypt will be destroyed. *Memphis*, the ancient capital of lower Egypt. *Pathros*, see Jer.44.1 n. *Zoan*, in the Greek period

- ¹⁵ And I will pour my wrath upon Pelusium, the stronghold of Egypt, and cut off the multitude of Thebes.
- ¹⁶ And I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium shall be in great agony; Thebes shall be breached, and its walls broken down.^c
- ¹⁷ The young men of On and of Pibese^t shall fall by the sword; and the women shall go into captivity.
- ¹⁸ At Tehaph'nehes the day shall be dark, when I break there the dominion of Egypt, and her proud might shall come to an end; she shall be covered by a cloud, and her daughters shall go into captivity.
- ¹⁹ Thus I will execute acts of judgment upon Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD.^d
- ²⁰ In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: ²¹ "Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and lo, it has not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so that it may become strong to wield the sword. ²² Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken; and I will make the sword fall from his hand. ²³ I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them throughout the lands. ²⁴ And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in

his hand; but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a man mortally wounded. ²⁵ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall; and they shall know that I am the LORD. When I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, he shall stretch it out against the land of Egypt; ²⁶ and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

31 In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude:

"Whom are you like in your greatness?

³ Behold, I will liken you to^d a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches and forest shade, and of great height, its top among the clouds.^e

⁴ The waters nourished it, the deep made it grow tall, making its rivers flow^f round the place of its planting, sending forth its streams to all the trees of the forest.

⁵ So it towered high above all the trees of the forest; its boughs grew large and its branches long, from abundant water in its shoots.

⁶ All the birds of the air made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young; and under its shadow dwelt all great nations.

c Cn: Heb and Memphis, distresses by day

d Cn: Heb Behold, Assyria

e Gk: Heb thick boughs f Gk: Heb going

Tanis, in the northeast delta region. *Thebes* is present-day Karnak (Jer.46.25). *Pelusium*, east of Zoan. *On* is Heliopolis (see Jer.43.13 n.). *Pibese^t*, Bubastis. *Tehaphnehes*, Tahpanhes (Jer. 43.7). **20-26:** April 29, 587 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar had broken one arm of Hophra the year before (see 29.1-16 n.); the next time, he will break both arms.

31.1-18: Allegory of the cedar (compare ch. 17). Date, June 21, 587 B.C. Ezekiel uses an ancient Babylonian myth to emphasize that, as with Tyre (28.1-5), the cause for Egypt's fall was pride (and political unreliability, 29.6-9). **4: The deep** (Hebrew *tehom*; compare Tiamat, the Babylonian dragon of the watery chaos; see Is.51.9-11 n.), ancient mythological opponent of

⁷ It was beautiful in its greatness,
in the length of its branches;
for its roots went down
to abundant waters.

⁸ The cedars in the garden of God
could not rival it,
nor the fir trees equal its boughs;
the plane trees were as nothing
compared with its branches;
no tree in the garden of God
was like it in beauty.

⁹ I made it beautiful
in the mass of its branches,
and all the trees of Eden envied it,
that were in the garden of God.

10 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because it^g towered high and set its top among the clouds,^h and its heart was proud of its height, ¹¹ I will give it into the hand of a mighty one of the nations; he shall surely deal with it as its wickedness deserves. I have cast it out. ¹² Foreigners, the most terrible of the nations, will cut it down and leave it. On the mountains and in all the valleys its branches will fall, and its boughs will lie broken in all the water-courses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth will go from its shadow and leave it. ¹³ Upon its ruin will dwell all the birds of the air, and upon its branches will be all the beasts of the field. ¹⁴ All this is in order that no trees by the waters may grow to lofty height or set their tops among the clouds,^h and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height; for they are all given over to death, to the nether world among mortal men, with those who go down to the Pit.

15 "Thus says the Lord God: When it goes down to Sheol I will make the deep mourn forⁱ it, and restrain its

ivers, and many waters shall be stopped; I will clothe Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field shall faint because of it. ¹⁶ I will make the nations quake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to Sheol with those who go down to the Pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, will be comforted in the nether world. ¹⁷ They also shall go down to Sheol with it, to those who are slain by the sword; yea, those who dwelt under its shadow among the nations shall perish.^j ¹⁸ Whom are you thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? You shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the nether world; you shall lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword.

"This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, says the Lord God."

32 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him:

"You consider yourself a lion among the nations,

but you are like a dragon in the seas;

you burst forth in your rivers,
trouble the waters with your feet,
and foul their rivers.

³ Thus says the Lord God:

I will throw my net over you
with a host of many peoples;
and I^k will haul you up in my dragnet.

⁴ And I will cast you on the ground,

^g Syr Vg: Heb you ^h Gk: Heb thick boughs

ⁱ Gk: Heb mourn for, I have covered

^j Compare Gk: Heb obscure ^k Gk Vg: Heb they

the gods, nourished the tree so that it reached into the heavens and sheltered all life. 7-9: The splendor of the great cedar, Egypt, was incomparable (28.11-19), surpassing those in the garden of God (thus rivaling God, Gen.11.1-9). 10-18: But God will cut it down; the life it sheltered will be dispersed, and it will go down to Sheol (28.8-10) where it will lie not with the honored dead, the trees of Eden, but with those who died untimely, violent, or dishonorable deaths. Later the great world tree, or tree of life, became a motif in Near Eastern (e.g. Persian) apocalypticism.

32.1-16: Lament over Pharaoh. The date is March 3, 585 B.C. Though Pharaoh thought himself a lion (symbol of royal power, see 19.1-9 n.; compare the lion-bodied sphinx), he is only a sea monster whom God will capture with a net (12.13), as Marduk captured Tiamat

on the open field I will fling you,
and will cause all the birds of the
air to settle on you,
and I will gorge the beasts of the
whole earth with you.

⁵ I will strew your flesh upon the
mountains,
and fill the valleys with your
carcass.¹

⁶ I will drench the land even to the
mountains
with your flowing blood;
and the watercourses will be full
of you.

⁷ When I blot you out, I will cover
the heavens,
and make their stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon shall not give its
light.

⁸ All the bright lights of heaven
will I make dark over you,
and put darkness upon your land,
says the Lord God.

⁹ "I will trouble the hearts of many
peoples, when I carry you captive"
among the nations, into the countries
which you have not known. ¹⁰ I will
make many peoples appalled at you,
and their kings shall shudder because
of you, when I brandish my sword be-
fore them; they shall tremble every mo-
ment, every one for his own life, on the
day of your downfall. ¹¹ For thus says
the Lord God: The sword of the king
of Babylon shall come upon you. ¹² I
will cause your multitude to fall by the
swords of mighty ones, all of them most
terrible among the nations.

"They shall bring to nought the pride
of Egypt,

and all its multitude shall perish.

¹³ I will destroy all its beasts
from beside many waters;

and no foot of man shall trouble them
any more,
nor shall the hoofs of beasts
trouble them.

¹⁴ Then I will make their waters clear,
and cause their rivers to run like
oil, says the Lord God.

¹⁵ When I make the land of Egypt
desolate
and when the land is stripped of
all that fills it,
when I smite all who dwell in it,
then they will know that I am the
LORD.

¹⁶ This is a lamentation which shall be
chanted; the daughters of the nations
shall chant it; over Egypt, and over all
her multitude, shall they chant it, says
the Lord God."

¹⁷ In the twelfth year, in the first
month," on the fifteenth day of the
month, the word of the LORD came to
me: ¹⁸ "Son of man, wail over the mul-
titude of Egypt, and send them down,
her and the daughters of majestic na-
tions, to the nether world, to those who
have gone down to the Pit:

¹⁹ 'Whom do you surpass in beauty?
Go down, and be laid with the
uncircumcised.'

²⁰ They shall fall amid those who are
slain by the sword,^o and with her shall
lie all her multitudes.^p ²¹ The mighty
chiefs shall speak of them, with their
helpers, out of the midst of Sheol:
'They have come down, they lie still,
the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.'

²² "Assyria is there, and all her
company, their graves round about her,
all of them slain, fallen by the sword;

¹ Symmachus Syr Vg: Heb *your height*

^m Gk: Heb *bring your destruction*

ⁿ Gk: Heb *lacks in the first month*

^o Gk Syr: Heb *sword, the sword is delivered*

^p Gk: Heb *they have drawn her away and all her multi-
tudes*

(see 31.4 n.), and will expose on land for carrion (29.1–16). Verses 7–8 recall the day of the LORD (see 30.1–5 n.; Is.13.10; Jl.2.2) in which God overcomes all that oppose him. The recurring *sword* of God (vv. 10–12; 21.1–32; 30.25; compare Lev.26.33; Is.34.5–6; Jer.12.12) recalls the sword-wielding Baal depicted in statues found by archaeologists. Egypt will become a lifeless wasteland (Jer.4.23–28), mourned by professional mourning women (Jer.9.17–18).

32.17–32: Egypt in the underworld (April 27, 586 B.C.). Like Tyre (28.10), Egypt will join those in that section of the underworld reserved for the uncircumcized and those who are executed or who die violent or untimely deaths. They do not enjoy the status of the honored war-dead, who were properly buried (v. 27). In its dishonorable demise Egypt will join others

²³ whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the Pit, and her company is round about her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living.

²⁴ "Elam is there, and all her multitude about her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised into the nether world, who spread terror in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit. ²⁵ They have made her a bed among the slain with all her multitude, their graves round about her, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for terror of them was spread in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit; they are placed among the slain.

²⁶ "Meshech and Tubal are there, and all their multitude, their graves round about them, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread terror in the land of the living. ²⁷ And they do not lie with the fallen mighty men of old^q who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose shields^r are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living. ²⁸ So you shall be broken and lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword.

²⁹ "Edom is there, her kings and all her princes, who for all their might are laid with those who are slain by the sword; they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the Pit.

³⁰ "The princes of the north are there, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror which they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit.

³¹ "When Pharaoh sees them, he will comfort himself for all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, says the Lord God. ³² For he^s spread terror in the land of the living; therefore he shall be laid among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, says the Lord God."

33 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman; ³ and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people; ⁴ then if any one who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. ⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet, and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. ⁶ But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes, and takes any one of them; that man is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.

⁷ "So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way;

^q Gk Old Latin: Heb of the uncircumcised

^r Cn: Heb iniquities

^s Cn: Heb I

who were objects of God's wrath (Is.14.9-11), such as *Assyria* (Nah. chs. 1-3); *Elam* (Jer.49.34-39); *Meshech and Tubal* (see 38.2 n.; Gen.10.2 n.); *Edom* (25.12-14); *Sidon* (28.20-23); *princes of the north* (v. 30), unnamed rulers in Phoenicia and Syria.

33.1-39.29: Oracles of restoration. 33.1-20: Responsibility. 1-9: The prophet as watchman (Is.21.6; Jer.6.17) applies Ezekiel's doctrine of individual responsibility. Compare 3.16-21.

he shall die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

10 "And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: 'Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?' ¹¹ Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel? ¹² And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses; and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness; and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness' when he sins. ¹³ Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in the iniquity that he has committed he shall die. ¹⁴ Again, though I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' yet if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, ¹⁵ if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. ¹⁶ None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right, he shall surely live.

17 "Yet your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not just'; when it is their own way that is not just. ¹⁸ When the righteous turns from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, he shall die for it. ¹⁹ And when the wicked turns from his wickedness, and does what is lawful and right, he shall live by it. ²⁰ Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not

just.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."

21 In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen." ²² Now the hand of the LORD had been upon me the evening before the fugitive came; and he had opened my mouth by the time the man came to me in the morning; so my mouth was opened, and I was no longer dumb.

23 The word of the LORD came to me: ²⁴ "Son of man, the inhabitants of these waste places in the land of Israel keep saying, 'Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess.' ²⁵ Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: You eat flesh with the blood, and lift up your eyes to your idols, and shed blood; shall you then possess the land? ²⁶ You resort to the sword, you commit abominations and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife; shall you then possess the land? ²⁷ Say this to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword; and him that is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured; and those who are in strongholds and in caves shall die by pestilence. ²⁸ And I will make the land a desolation and a waste; and her proud might shall come to an end; and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that none will pass through. ²⁹ Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations which they have committed.

30 "As for you, son of man, your people who talk together about you

1 Heb by it

Death (vv. 8-9) may refer to premature death as contrasted with blessed longevity. 10-20: On individual responsibility. This oracle re-emphasizes 14.12-23 and 18.5-32.

33.21-33: Miscellanea. 21-22: January 19, 586 B.C. (read "eleventh" for *twelfth*). A few months after the fall of Jerusalem, word reached Ezekiel and his tongue was loosed (3.24-27). Perhaps these two verses, which are unrelated to this context, should follow 24.27. 23-29: Expansion on the problem of possession of Palestinian property formerly belonging to de-

by the walls and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, each to his brother, 'Come, and hear what the word is that comes forth from the LORD.'

³¹ And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with their lips they show much love, but their heart is set on their gain. ³² And, lo, you are to them like one who sings love songs^u with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it. ³³ When this comes—and come it will!—then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

34 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³ You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. ⁴ The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. ⁵ So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the wild beasts. ⁶ My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

⁷ "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸ As I live, says the Lord GOD, because my sheep have

become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd; and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep; ⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.

¹¹ "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep" have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and

^u Cn: Heb like a love song

^v Cn: Heb when he is among his sheep

portees. Note the three scourges in v. 27 (14.21; 21.3–5). **30–33:** Consistent with human nature, the people heard what they wanted to hear. But the day approaches when they will be reminded that with the words of God's love were also the words of God's justice (Jer.5.12–13). *Song*, oracles may have been chanted (2 Kg.3.15).

34.1–31: The shepherds of Israel. **1–10:** The shepherds (i.e. kings) had misused their people (Jer.23.13–17) and scattered them (Jer.10.21; 23.1–4). This oracle applies the doctrine of individual responsibility (18.5–32) to the rulers, who are also subject to God's law (2 Sam.12.1–15). *Wild beasts*, Judah's attackers, especially Babylonia. **11–16:** God is the Good Shepherd (Is.40.11; Jer.31.10) who will gather the dispersed and injured flock. This passage suggests a

the strong I will watch over;^w I will feed them in justice.

17 "As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, rams and he-goats.¹⁸ Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must foul the rest with your feet?¹⁹ And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have fouled with your feet?

20 "Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.²¹ Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad,²² I will save my flock, they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.²³ And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

25 "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.²⁶ And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.²⁷ And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and

the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.²⁸ They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them; they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid.²⁹ And I will provide for them prosperous^x plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations.³⁰ And they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord GOD.³¹ And you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture," and I am your God, says the Lord GOD."

35 The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face against Mount Se'ir, and prophesy against it, ³ and say to it, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, mount Se'ir, and I will stretch out my hand against you, and I will make you a desolation and a waste. ⁴ I will lay your cities waste, and you shall become a desolation; and you shall know that I am the LORD. ⁵ Because you cherished perpetual enmity, and gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of their final punishment; ⁶ therefore, as I live, says the Lord GOD, I will prepare you

^w Gk Syr Vg: Heb *destroy*

^x Gk Syr Old Latin: Heb *for renown*

^y Gk Old Latin: Heb *pasture you are men*

return to theocracy (Hos.8.4; 1 Sam.8.7). **17-22:** Sheep, good and bad, are found in the flock; the bad must be separated out and punished (Mt.25.31-32). The figure may have a double meaning and refer also to the nations which oppress Israel. **23-24:** God will place his *servant David* (2 Sam.3.18), i.e. a restored monarchy, over his people (37.22-25; Jer.23.5-6). *One shepherd*, see Hos.1.11; Jn.10.16. **25-31:** Using the oldest term for covenant making (see Jer.31.31-34), the prophet affirms that God will make a *covenant of peace* (37.26; Heb.13.20). God, again resident on Mount Zion (*my hill*), will preserve the proper sequence of seasons (Gen.8.21-22), assuring his people of continuous prosperity (Am.9.13-14), free from fear of destruction within (*wild beasts*, Lev.26.6) and without (*prey of nations*).

35.1-15: The oracle against Edom is an editorial expansion of an oracle of Ezekiel, using Ezekiel's phraseology (compare vv. 1-3 with 6.1-3). Properly belonging with 25.12-14, it was placed here to be contrasted with ch. 36 (especially 36.5), forming the prelude to Israel's restoration. It reflects the growing intensity of Jewish hatred for Edom subsequent to Edom's occupation of southern Judah (Jer.49.7-22). In contrast with Egypt (29.13-16), Edom will remain

for blood, and blood shall pursue you; because you are guilty of blood,² therefore blood shall pursue you. ⁷ I will make Mount Se'ir a waste and a desolation; and I will cut off from it all who come and go. ⁸ And I will fill your mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those slain with the sword shall fall. ⁹ I will make you a perpetual desolation, and your cities shall not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

10 "Because you said, 'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will take possession of them,'—although the LORD was there—¹¹ therefore, as I live, says the LORD GOD, I will deal with you according to the anger and envy which you showed because of your hatred against them; and I will make myself known among you,^a when I judge you. ¹² And you shall know that I, the LORD, have heard all the revilings which you uttered against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They are laid desolate, they are given us to devour.' ¹³ And you magnified yourselves against me with your mouth, and multiplied your words against me; I heard it. ¹⁴ Thus says the LORD GOD: For the rejoicing of the whole earth I will make you desolate. ¹⁵ As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so I will deal with you; you shall be desolate, Mount Se'ir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

36 "And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. ² Thus says the LORD GOD: Because the enemy said of you, 'Aha!' and, 'The ancient heights have become our possession,' ³ therefore prophesy, and say, Thus says the

Lord GOD: Because, yea, because they made you desolate, and crushed you from all sides, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you became the talk and evil gossip of the people; ⁴ therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD: Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and the hills, the ravines and the valleys, the desolate wastes and the deserted cities, which have become a prey and derision to the rest of the nations round about; ⁵ therefore thus says the Lord GOD: I speak in my hot jealousy against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who gave my land to themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and utter contempt, that they might possess^b it and plunder it. ⁶ Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I speak in my jealous wrath, because you have suffered the reproach of the nations; ⁷ therefore thus says the Lord GOD: I swear that the nations that are round about you shall themselves suffer reproach.

8 "But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they will soon come home. ⁹ For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown; ¹⁰ and I will multiply men upon you, the whole house of Israel, all of it; the cities shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt; ¹¹ and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you

² Gk: Heb you have hated blood

^a Gk: Heb them

^b One Ms: Heb drive out

forever desolate. *Mount Seir* is the plateau rising east of the Arabah in which Sela, the Edomite capital, was located.

36.1-39.29: The new Israel. 36.1-38: Prophecy to the mountains of Israel; the restoration of Israel. 36.1-7: Mountains of Israel, the highlands, represent all Israel (Dt.3.25). Though dispossessed by *Edom* (35.1-15) and surrounding nations (Neh.2.19), Israel will be restored to her heritage (Mal.1.2-5). **8-15:** The land will surpass its pristine productivity (*at your beginnings*,

will know that I am the LORD.¹² Yea, I will let men walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance, and you shall no longer bereave them of children.¹³ Thus says the Lord God: Because men say to you, 'You devour men, and you bereave your nation of children,'¹⁴ therefore you shall no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children, says the Lord God;¹⁵ and I will not let you hear any more the reproach of the nations, and you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples and no longer cause your nation to stumble, says the Lord God."

16 The word of the LORD came to me:¹⁷ "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their doings; their conduct before me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity.¹⁸ So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood which they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it.¹⁹ I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries; in accordance with their conduct and their deeds I judged them.²⁰ But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that men said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.'²¹ But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came.

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake

of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.²³ And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am the LORD, says the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.²⁴ For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land.²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.²⁶ A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.²⁸ You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.²⁹ And I will deliver you from all your uncleanness; and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you.³⁰ I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.³¹ Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds.³² It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.

33 "Thus says the Lord God: On the day that I cleanse you from all

the Exodus; Hos.11.1-4; Jer.2.1-3). 14: *No longer devour men*, the hilltops will not serve again as fertility cult sanctuaries (6.1-14; Dt.12.1-3,29-31), perhaps involving human sacrifices. 16-21: The land was defiled by Israel's offering of pagan sacrifices, thereby profaning God's name (Lev.18.21; 20.3). 17: *Uncleanness*, due to menstruation (18.6; Lev.15.19-30). 22-32: As in ch. 20, God reminds Israel that he will restore them, his people (Ex.6.7; Lev.20.24), for the sake of his name; like Ezekiel (12.6; 24.27) they will be a sign, for all nations. 26: *The new heart* (18.31) will be created by God's spirit (ch. 37; Is.44.3; Rom.8.3-6); he will *cleanse* them (Ex.30.17-21), for man cannot make himself clean. 33-36: The skeptical nations (v. 20) will recognize Israel's restoration (Jer.31.23-28) as God's act. 37-38: *Like a flock*, see ch. 34.

your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt: ³⁴ And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. ³⁵ And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified.' ³⁶ Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it.

37 "Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their men like a flock. ³⁸ Like the flock for sacrifices,^c like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

37 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley;^d it was full of bones. ² And he led me round among them; and behold, there were very many upon the valley;^d and lo, they were very dry. ³ And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest." ⁴ Again he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath^e to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath^e in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

7 So I prophesied as I was com-

manded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath,^f Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath,^f and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host.

11 Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' ¹² Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done it, says the LORD."

15 The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁶ "Son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah, and the children of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write upon it, 'For Joseph (the stick of E'phraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him'; ¹⁷ and join them together

c Heb flock of holy things d Or plain
e Or spirit f Or wind or spirit

37.1-14: Vision of the valley of dry bones. 1: Valley, "plain" in 3.22; 8.4. The bones are the exiles, who have no more hope of resuscitating the kingdom of Israel than of putting flesh on a skeleton and calling it to life. 9: Hebrew "rûah" means "spirit, breath, wind"; thus there is a constant word-play here. Four winds may refer to God's omnipresence (1.17). 14: This vision has no direct connection with the Christian doctrine of resurrection.

37.15-28: Oracle of the two sticks (Zech.11.7-14) envisions the re-unification of the long-divided land and the establishment of a united Israel, ruled by one king; then the situation

into one stick, that they may become one in your hand.¹⁸ And when your people say to you, 'Will you not show us what you mean by these?'¹⁹ say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (which is in the hand of E'phraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him; and I will join^s with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand.²⁰ When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes,²¹ then say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all sides, and bring them to their own land;²² and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.²³ They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

24 "My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes.²⁵ They shall dwell in the land where your fathers dwelt that I

gave to my servant Jacob; they and their children and their children's children shall dwell there for ever; and David my servant shall be their prince for ever.²⁶ I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless^h them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.²⁷ My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.²⁸ Then the nations will know that I the LORD sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore."

38 The word of the LORD came to me:² "Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him³ and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal;⁴ and I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you forth, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great company, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords;⁵ Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet;⁶ Gomer and all his hordes; Beth-togar'mah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes—many peoples are with you.

7 "Be ready and keep ready, you

g Heb join them *h* Tg: Heb give

earlier predicted will prevail (34.28): law-abiding living (11.20) in the promised land (28.25) under the Davidic king (34.23–24); the covenant of peace (34.25); and the re-established central sanctuary (45.1–8). **25:** *Prince*, the king (compare 12.10; 34.24).

38.1–39.29: The Gog and Magog oracles describe in apocalyptic language the coming of the foe from the north (38.15; Jer.6.22) against God's people living peacefully in the promised land (38.8,11–12). After a cataclysmic battle the aggressor forces will be completely defeated, and God will be acknowledged by all nations as the undisputed victor (38.23; 39.21–29; 36.22–23). Since the foe from the north in Jeremiah (Jer.25.9) and Ezekiel (Ezek.26.7) was Babylon, it is probable that the foe here described is a grandiose surrogate for Babylon. The conflict is that preceding the fall of Babylon, and the victory includes Israel's restoration to its land (34.11–16; 36.8–38; Jer.31.23–28). The limited scope and goal of these oracles has been expanded to cosmic proportions by the writer of Rev.20.7–10. **38.1–9:** *Gog*, king of *Magog*, both unidentified, though general location is in the north. *Meshech*, Assyrian "Mushku," south of Gomer, west of the Anti-Taurus mountains (27.13). *Tubal*, Assyrian "Tabal," south of Beth-togarmah, east of the Anti-Taurus mountains. *Cush*, Ethiopia. *Put*, see 30.5 n. *Gomer*, Assyrian "Gimirrai," Cimmerians in central Asia Minor (Gen.10.2–3). *Beth-togarmah*, Assyrian "Til-garimmu," east of the

and all the hosts that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. ⁸ After many days you will be mustered; in the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land where people were gathered from many nations upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste; its people were brought out from the nations and now dwell securely, all of them. ⁹ You will advance, coming on like a storm, you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you.

10 "Thus says the Lord God: On that day thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme ¹¹ and say, 'I will go up against the land of unwallled villages; I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates'; ¹² to seize spoil and carry off plunder; to assail the waste places which are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have gotten cattle and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth. ¹³ Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hosts to carry off plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to seize great spoil?'

14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord God: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, you will bestir yourself ¹⁵ and come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army; ¹⁶ you will

come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

17 "Thus says the Lord God: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them? ¹⁸ But on that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord God, my wrath will be roused. ¹⁹ For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; ²⁰ the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. ²¹ I will summon every kind of terror ⁱ against Gog, ^k says the Lord God; every man's sword will be against his brother. ²² With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones, fire and brimstone. ²³ So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

39 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince

ⁱ Gk: Heb *will you not know?*

^j Gk: Heb *a sword to all my mountains*

^k Heb *him*

southernmost Halys River, southeast of Gomer (27.14). Though people and places in apocalyptic literature can often be identified, they are part of the literary equipment and should rarely be taken literally. *In the latter years* corresponds to "in the latter days" (Hos.3.5; Jer. 30.24) before the re-establishment of David's line (34.23-24; Jer.23.5-6). **10-23:** The plot against God's defenseless people is doomed to defeat. God will marshal all the forces of nature against Gog (Ps.18.7-15; Is.24.18-20; 30.27-33; Jl.2.28-32). **12:** *Center*, see 5.5 n. **13:** *Sheba*, 27.22. *Dedan*, 25.13. *Tarshish*, see Jer.10.9 n.

39.1-20: Gog's defeat. The magnitude of the opposing forces, and thus of God's victory, is

of Meshech and Tubal; ² and I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel; ³ then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. ⁴ You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples that are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the wild beasts to be devoured. ⁵ You shall fall in the open field; for I have spoken, says the Lord GOD. ⁶ I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

7 "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. ⁸ Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, says the Lord GOD. That is the day of which I have spoken.

9 "Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go forth and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, handpikes and spears, and they will make fires of them for seven years; ¹⁰ so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons; they will despoil those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, says the Lord GOD.

11 "On that day I will give to Gog a place for burial in Israel, the Valley of the Travelers' east of the sea; it will block the travelers, for there Gog and all his multitude will be buried; it will be called the Valley of Hamon-gog.^m ¹² For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to

cleanse the land. ¹³ All the people of the land will bury them; and it will redound to their honor on the day that I show my glory, says the Lord GOD. ¹⁴ They will set apart men to pass through the land continually and buryⁿ those remaining upon the face of the land, so as to cleanse it; at the end of seven months they will make their search. ¹⁵ And when these pass through the land and any one sees a man's bone, then he shall set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-gog. ¹⁶ (A city Hamo'nah^o is there also.) Thus shall they cleanse the land.

17 "As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field, 'Assemble and come, gather from all sides to the sacrificial feast which I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast upon the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸ You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. ¹⁹ And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast which I am preparing for you. ²⁰ And you shall be filled at my table with horses and riders, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,' says the Lord GOD.

21 "And I will set my glory among the nations; and all the nations shall see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid on them. ²² The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from that day forward. ²³ And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they dealt so

ⁱ Or *Abarim* ^m That is the multitude of Gog
ⁿ Gk Syr: Heb *bury the travelers*
^o That is *Multitude*

emphasized by the huge quantities of war material (enough *wood* for fuel for *seven years*) and by the *seven months* required to remove the enemy dead to the region east of the Dead Sea. The slaughter of those who dared oppose God and oppress his people is regarded as a sacrifice to God's glory. 21–29: Conclusion of the oracles—the victory and restoration told in familiar terms (5.8; 28.26; 34.30).

treacherously with me that I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. ²⁴ I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their transgressions, and hid my face from them.

²⁵ "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. ²⁶ They shall forget their shame, and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid, ²⁷ when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies' lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. ²⁸ Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God because I sent them into exile among the nations, and then gathered them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations any more; ²⁹ and I will not hide my face any more from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord God."

40 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was conquered, on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, ² and brought me in the visions of God into the land of Israel, and set me down

upon a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city opposite me.^p ³ When he brought me there, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like bronze, with a line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway. ⁴ And the man said to me, "Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your mind upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you; declare all that you see to the house of Israel."

⁵ And behold, there was a wall all around the outside of the temple area, and the length of the measuring reed in the man's hand was six long cubits, each being a cubit and a handbreadth in length; so he measured the thickness of the wall, one reed; and the height, one reed. ⁶ Then he went into the gateway facing east, going up its steps, and measured the threshold of the gate, one reed deep;^q ⁷ and the side rooms, one reed long, and one reed broad; and the space between the side rooms, five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the vestibule of the gate at the inner end, one reed. ⁸ Then he measured the vestibule of the gateway, eight cubits; ⁹ and its jambs, two cubits; and the vestibule of the gate was at the inner end. ¹⁰ And there were three side rooms on either side of the east gate; the three were of the same size; and the jambs on either side were of the same size. ¹¹ Then he measured the breadth of

^p Gk: Heb on the south

^q Heb deep, and one threshold, one reed deep

40.1-48.35: The vision of the restored temple and land. This section is really a continuation of the theme of chs. 33-39, but because of its unified description of Israel's religious and political restoration it may be separated from the less homogeneous preceding section. The temple, though somewhat idealized, is the Solomonic temple, in which Ezekiel probably served as priest before his exile (1.3) and which was destroyed in 587 B.C. **40.1-47: The temple area, gates, outer and inner courts.** 1-5: April 28, 573 B.C. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of his exile, Ezekiel is transported in a vision (compare 8.2-3) to the temple mountain (*very high mountain*, 17.22; Mic.4.1). 3: The *reed* was about ten feet, four inches long. 5: The *long cubit* was about 20.68 inches; the ordinary cubit was about 17.5 inches. The equal height and width of the outer retaining wall corresponds to the symmetry of the enclosure itself (42.16-20). 6-16: The detailed description of the east or processional gate (10.19) makes it possible to compare it with Solomonic gateways found at Megiddo, Gezer, and Hazor, all having the same design and essentially the same dimensions. After ascending seven steps (vv. 22,26) one came to the temple gate which had a double entrance vestibule, the second narrower than the first,

the opening of the gateway, ten cubits; and the breadth of the gateway, thirteen cubits. ¹² There was a barrier before the side rooms, one cubit on either side; and the side rooms were six cubits on either side. ¹³ Then he measured the gate from the back^r of the one side room to the back^r of the other, a breadth of five and twenty cubits, from door to door. ¹⁴ He measured also the vestibule, twenty cubits; and round about the vestibule of the gateway was the court.^s ¹⁵ From the front of the gate at the entrance to the end of the inner vestibule of the gate was fifty cubits. ¹⁶ And the gateway had windows round about, narrowing inwards into their jambs in the side rooms, and likewise the vestibule had windows round about inside, and on the jambs were palm trees.

¹⁷ Then he brought me into the outer court; and behold, there were chambers and a pavement, round about the court; thirty chambers fronted on the pavement. ¹⁸ And the pavement ran along the side of the gates, corresponding to the length of the gates; this was the lower pavement. ¹⁹ Then he measured the distance from the inner front of the lower gate to the outer front of the inner court, a hundred cubits.

Then he went before me to the north, ²⁰ and behold, there was a gate^u which faced toward the north, belonging to the outer court. He measured its length and its breadth. ²¹ Its side rooms, three on either side, and its jambs and its vestibule were of the same size as those of the first gate; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ²² And its windows, its vestibule, and its palm trees were

of the same size as those of the gate which faced toward the east; and seven steps led up to it; and its vestibule was on the inside. ²³ And opposite the gate on the north, as on the east, was a gate to the inner court; and he measured from gate to gate, a hundred cubits.

²⁴ And he led me toward the south, and behold, there was a gate on the south; and he measured its jambs and its vestibule; they had the same size as the others. ²⁵ And there were windows round about in it and in its vestibule, like the windows of the others; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ²⁶ And there were seven steps leading up to it, and its vestibule was on the inside; and it had palm trees on its jambs, one on either side. ²⁷ And there was a gate on the south of the inner court; and he measured from gate to gate toward the south, a hundred cubits.

²⁸ Then he brought me to the inner court by the south gate, and he measured the south gate; it was of the same size as the others. ²⁹ Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others; and there were windows round about in it and in its vestibule; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ³⁰ And there were vestibules round about, twenty-five cubits long and five cubits broad. ³¹ Its vestibule faced the outer court, and palm trees were on its jambs, and its stairway had eight steps.

³² Then he brought me to the inner

^r Compare Gk: Heb *roof*

^s Compare Gk: Heb *and he made the jambs sixty cubits, and to the jamb of the court was the gateway round about*

^t Compare Gk: Heb *from before*

^u Gk: Heb *a hundred cubits on the east and on the north. ²⁰And the gate*

and closed off from the interior by doors. The wall joined the gate at the entrance vestibules; the remainder of the gate extended into the outer court. The interior had three chambers, or guardrooms, on either side separated by heavy piers. Passing the last pier, one entered the outer court, or possibly first into an inner vestibule and then the outer court. The side chambers had back doors opening into the outer court. The windows, as the temple itself, were of Phoenician, or Tyrian, design, narrowing inwards. Palm trees were a common Near Eastern decorative motif. **17-19:** The thirty chambers were probably for the use of people and Levites worshipping in the outer court. **20-27:** Northern and southern gates were similar to the east gate. **28-37:** Eight steps above the outer court were the gates leading to the inner court corresponding to

court on the east side, and he measured the gate; it was of the same size as the others.³³ Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others; and there were windows round about in it and in its vestibule; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits.³⁴ Its vestibule faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its jambs, one on either side; and its stairway had eight steps.

35 Then he brought me to the north gate, and he measured it; it had the same size as the others.³⁶ Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others;^v and it had windows round about; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits.³⁷ Its vestibule^w faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its jambs, one on either side; and its stairway had eight steps.

38 There was a chamber with its door in the vestibule of the gate,^x where the burnt offering was to be washed.³⁹ And in the vestibule of the gate were two tables on either side, on which the burnt offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering were to be slaughtered.⁴⁰ And on the outside of the vestibule^y at the entrance of the north gate were two tables; and on the other side of the vestibule of the gate were two tables.⁴¹ Four tables were on the inside, and four tables on the outside of the side of the gate, eight tables, on which the sacrifices were to be slaughtered.⁴² And there were also four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering, a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high, on which the instruments were to be laid with which the burnt offerings and the sacrifices were slaughtered.

⁴³ And hooks, a handbreadth long, were fastened round about within. And on the tables the flesh of the offering was to be laid.

44 Then he brought me from without into the inner court, and behold, there were two chambers^z in the inner court, one^a at the side of the north gate facing south, the other at the side of the south^b gate facing north.⁴⁵ And he said to me, This chamber which faces south is for the priests who have charge of the temple,⁴⁶ and the chamber which faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar; these are the sons of Zadok, who alone among the sons of Levi may come near to the LORD to minister to him.⁴⁷ And he measured the court, a hundred cubits long, and a hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar was in front of the temple.

48 Then he brought me to the vestibule of the temple and measured the jambs of the vestibule, five cubits on either side; and the breadth of the gate was fourteen cubits; and the side-walls of the gate were three cubits^c on either side.⁴⁹ The length of the vestibule was twenty cubits, and the breadth twelve^d cubits; and ten steps led up^e to it; and there were pillars beside the jambs on either side.

41 Then he brought me to the nave, and measured the jambs; on each side six cubits was the breadth of the jambs.^f ² And the breadth of the en-

^v One Ms Compare verses 29 and 33: Heb lacks were of the same size as the others

^w Gk Vg Compare verses 26, 31, 34: Heb jambs

^x Cn: Heb at the jambs of the gates

^y Cn: Heb to him who goes up

^z Gk: Heb and from without to the inner gate were chambers for singers

^a Gk: Heb which

^b Gk: Heb east

^c Gk: Heb and the breadth of the gate was three cubits

^d Gk: Heb eleven

^e Gk: Heb and by steps which went up

^f Compare Gk: Heb tent

those leading to the outer court. The temple was built on a succession of terraces. **38-43:** At the east gate leading to the inner court were the facilities for the preparation of the sacrifices (Lev.1.1-7.38). **44-47:** On the north and south sides of the square inner court were buildings for the use of the Zadokite priests (43.19; 44.15-16).

40.48-41.26: The temple arrangements. 48-49: The temple was ten steps (about ten feet; see 41.8) above the level of the inner court. In front of the vestibule were Solomon's free-standing pillars (1 Kg.7.15-22). **41.1-4:** The tripartite temple division is known also from the thirteenth century Canaanite temple at Hazor and the eighth century temple at Tell Tainat (Hattina) in

trance was ten cubits; and the sidewalls of the entrance were five cubits on either side; and he measured the length of the nave forty cubits, and its breadth, twenty cubits. ³ Then he went into the inner room and measured the jambs of the entrance, two cubits; and the breadth of the entrance, six cubits; and the sidewalls^g of the entrance, seven cubits. ⁴ And he measured the length of the room, twenty cubits, and its breadth, twenty cubits, beyond the nave. And he said to me, This is the most holy place.

⁵ Then he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits thick; and the breadth of the side chambers, four cubits, round about the temple. ⁶ And the side chambers were in three stories, one over another, thirty in each story. There were offsets^h all around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side chambers, so that they should not be supported by the wall of the temple. ⁷ And the side chambers became broader as they roseⁱ from story to story, corresponding to the enlargement of the offset^j from story to story round about the temple; on the side of the temple a stairway led upward, and thus one went up from the lowest story to the top story through the middle story. ⁸ I saw also that the temple had a raised platform round about; the foundations of the side chambers measured a full reed of six long cubits. ⁹ The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was five cubits; and the part of the platform which was left free was five cubits.^k Between the platform^l of the temple and the ¹⁰ chambers of the court was a breadth of twenty cubits round about the temple on every side. ¹¹ And the doors of the side chambers opened on the part of the platform that

was left free, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south; and the breadth of the part that was left free was five cubits round about.

¹² The building that was facing the temple yard on the west side was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about, and its length ninety cubits.

¹³ Then he measured the temple, a hundred cubits long; and the yard and the building with its walls, a hundred cubits long; ¹⁴ also the breadth of the east front of the temple and the yard, a hundred cubits.

¹⁵ Then he measured the length of the building facing the yard which was at the west and its walls^m on either side, a hundred cubits.

The nave of the temple and the inner room and the outerⁿ vestibule ¹⁶ were paneled^o and round about all three had windows with recessed^p frames. Over against the threshold the temple was paneled with wood round about, from the floor up to the windows (now the windows were covered), ¹⁷ to the space above the door, even to the inner room, and on the outside. And on all the walls round about in the inner room and the nave were carved likenesses^q ¹⁸ of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Every cherub had two faces: ¹⁹ the face of a man toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved on the

^g Gk: Heb *breadth*

^h Gk Compare 1 Kg 6.6: Heb *they entered*

ⁱ Cn: Heb *it was surrounded*

^j Gk: Heb *for the encompassing of the temple*

^k Syr: Heb *lacks five cubits*

^l Cn: Heb *house of the side chambers*

^m Cn: The meaning of the Hebrew term is unknown

ⁿ Gk: Heb *of the court* ^o Gk: Heb *the thresholds*

^p Cn Compare Gk 1 Kg 6.4: The meaning of the Hebrew term is unknown

^q Cn: Heb *measures and carved*

northern Syria. *The vestibule* (40.48–49) was 35½ by 20½ feet; *the nave* (41.1–2), 35½ by 71 feet; and *the inner room* (41.3–4), or *most holy place*, which Ezekiel did not enter (Lev.16.1–34), 35½ by 35½ feet (1 Kg.6.1–8.66; Ex.26.31–37). 5–11: The three tiers of thirty chambers per tier on the sides of the temple (1 Kg.6.5–10) were probably for equipment for the temple services, storage, and the temple treasures (1 Kg.14.26; 2 Kg.14.14). 12–15a: The purpose of the auxiliary building is unknown; earlier it may have served as a stable for sacred horses, now removed (2 Kg.23.11). 15b–26: The windows were like those in the gates (40.16); for the

whole temple round about; ²⁰ from the floor to above the door cherubim and palm trees were carved on the wall.^r

21 The doorposts of the nave were squared; and in front of the holy place was something resembling ²² an altar of wood, three cubits high, two cubits long, and two cubits broad;^s its corners, its base,^t and its walls were of wood. He said to me, "This is the table which is before the LORD."²³ The nave and the holy place had each a double door. ²⁴ The doors had two leaves apiece, two swinging leaves for each door. ²⁵ And on the doors of the nave were carved cherubim and palm trees, such as were carved on the walls; and there was a canopy of wood in front of the vestibule outside. ²⁶ And there were recessed windows and palm trees on either side, on the sidewalls of the vestibule.^u

42 Then he led me out into the inner^v court, toward the north, and he brought me to the chambers which were opposite the temple yard and opposite the building on the north. ² The length of the building which was on the north side^w was^x a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty cubits. ³ Adjoining the twenty cubits which belonged to the inner court, and facing the pavement which belonged to the outer court, was gallery^y against gallery^y in three stories. ⁴ And before the chambers was a passage inward, ten cubits wide and a hundred cubits long,^z and their doors were on the north. ⁵ Now the upper chambers were narrower, for the galleries^y took more away from them than from the lower and middle chambers in the building. ⁶ For they were in three stories, and they had no pillars like the pillars of

the outer^a court; hence the upper chambers were set back from the ground more than the lower and the middle ones. ⁷ And there was a wall outside parallel to the chambers, toward the outer court, opposite the chambers, fifty cubits long. ⁸ For the chambers on the outer court were fifty cubits long, while those opposite the temple were a hundred cubits long. ⁹ Below these chambers was an entrance on the east side, as one enters them from the outer court, ¹⁰ where the outside wall begins.^b

On the south^c also, opposite the yard and opposite the building, there were chambers ¹¹ with a passage in front of them; they were similar to the chambers on the north, of the same length and breadth, with the same exits^d and arrangements and doors. ¹² And below the south chambers was an entrance on the east side, where one enters the passage, and opposite them was a dividing wall.^e

13 Then he said to me, "The north chambers and the south chambers opposite the yard are the holy chambers, where the priests who approach the LORD shall eat the most holy offerings; there they shall put the most holy offerings—the cereal offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering, for the place is holy. ¹⁴ When the priests enter the holy place, they shall not go out of it into the outer court without

^r Cn Compare verse 25: Heb and the wall

^s Gk: Heb lacks two cubits broad ^t Gk: Heb length

^u Cn: Heb vestibule. And the side chambers of the temple and the canopies ^v Gk: Heb outer

^w Gk: Heb door ^x Gk: Heb before the length

^y The meaning of the Hebrew word is unknown

^z Gk Syr: Heb a way of one cubit

^a Gk: Heb lacks outer

^b Cn Compare Gk: Heb in the breadth of the wall of the court ^c Gk: Heb east

^d Heb and all their exits

^e Cn: Heb And according to the entrances of the chambers that were toward the south was an entrance at the head of the way, the way before the dividing wall toward the east as one enters them

decorative motifs, see 1 Kg.6.29–30; on the *cherubim*, see 1.5 n. 22: The table (perhaps for the bread of the Presence), see 1 Kg.6.20–22; Lev.24.5–9.

42.1–14: The priests' chambers. The description is unclear. Perhaps the three stories of chambers were arranged terrace-fashion against the north and south terrace-walls retaining the inner court, with staircases leading to the upper stories and halls on each level into which the chamber doors opened. A second, smaller, apartment-building was opposite, on the outer court side. In them the priests were to store their share of the sacrifices (44.28–31; Lev.2.1–10; 7.7–10), eat their meals, and leave the garments they wore for the services before entering the outer

laying there the garments in which they minister, for these are holy; they shall put on other garments before they go near to that which is for the people."

15 Now when he had finished measuring the interior of the temple area, he led me out by the gate which faced east, and measured the temple area round about. ¹⁶ He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. ¹⁷ Then he turned and measured^f the north side, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. ¹⁸ Then he turned and measured^g the south side, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. ¹⁹ Then he turned to the west side and measured, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. ²⁰ He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits broad, to make a separation between the holy and the common.

43 Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. ² And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with his glory. ³ And^g the vision I saw was like the vision which I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and^h like the vision which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. ⁴ As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, ⁵ the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

⁶ While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me

out of the temple; ⁷ and he said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel for ever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their harlotry, and by the dead bodiesⁱ of their kings, ⁸ by setting their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them. They have defiled my holy name by their abominations which they have committed, so I have consumed them in my anger. ⁹ Now let them put away their idolatry and the dead bodiesⁱ of their kings far from me, and I will dwell in their midst for ever.

¹⁰ "And you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple and its appearance and plan,^j that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. ¹¹ And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, portray^k the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, and its whole form; and make known to them all its ordinances and all its laws; and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe and perform all its laws^l and all its ordinances. ¹² This is the law of the temple: the whole territory round about upon the top of the mountain shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.

¹³ "These are the dimensions of the altar by cubits (the cubit being a cubit and a handbreadth): its base

^f Gk: Heb measuring reed round about. He measured

^g Gk: Heb And like the vision

^h Syr: Heb and the visions

ⁱ Or the monuments

^j Gk: Heb the temple that they may measure the pattern

^k Gk: Heb the form of

^l Compare Gk: Heb its whole form

court. **15-20:** The total temple area was five hundred cubits square (861.63 feet square; see 40.5 n.).

43.1-12: Return of the glory of God. As God on his throne-chariot had forsaken the temple by the east gate (10.18-19; 11.22-23), so he returns from the same direction and re-consecrates the purified temple by his Presence (Ex.40.34-38; 1 Kg.8.10-11). *Thundering of many waters*, 1.24; Rev.14.2; 19.6. Like the brightness of the sun, *the earth shone with his glory* (Is.60.1-3). **6-12:** The restored temple is to be restricted to purely religious uses, as commanded by God; especially discouraged is any influence from the crown (ch. 8; 1 Kg.7.1-12; 11.33; Am.7.13).

43.13-26: The altar of burnt offering. 13-17: The altar was built in three superimposed squares of sixteen, fourteen, and twelve cubits respectively, resting on a foundation platform,

shall be one cubit high,^m and one cubit broad, with a rim of one span around its edge. And this shall be the height^r of the altar: ¹⁴ from the base on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits, with a breadth of one cubit; and from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge, four cubits, with a breadth of one cubit; ¹⁵ and the altar hearth, four cubits; and from the altar hearth projecting upward, four horns, one cubit high.ⁿ ¹⁶ The altar hearth shall be square, twelve cubits long by twelve broad. ¹⁷ The ledge also shall be square, fourteen cubits long by fourteen broad, with a rim around it half a cubit broad, and its base one cubit round about. The steps of the altar shall face east."

¹⁸ And he said to me, "Son of man, thus says the Lord God: These are the ordinances for the altar: On the day when it is erected for offering burnt offerings upon it and for throwing blood against it, ¹⁹ you shall give to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who draw near to me to minister to me, says the Lord God, a bull for a sin offering. ²⁰ And you shall take some of its blood, and put it on the four horns of the altar, and on the four corners of the ledge, and upon the rim round about; thus you shall cleanse the altar and make atonement for it. ²¹ You shall also take the bull of the sin offering, and it shall be burnt in the appointed place belonging to the temple, outside the sacred area. ²² And on the second day you shall offer a he-goat without blemish for a sin offering; and the altar shall be cleansed, as it was cleansed with the bull. ²³ When you have finished cleansing it, you shall offer a bull without blemish and a ram from the flock

without blemish. ²⁴ You shall present them before the LORD, and the priests shall sprinkle salt upon them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD. ²⁵ For seven days you shall provide daily a goat for a sin offering; also a bull and a ram from the flock, without blemish, shall be provided. ²⁶ Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and purify it, and so consecrate it. ²⁷ And when they have completed these days, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer upon the altar your burnt offerings and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, says the Lord God."

44 Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. ² And he^o said to me, "This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut. ³ Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way."

⁴ Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple of the LORD; and I fell upon my face. ⁵ And the LORD said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all that I shall tell you concerning all the ordinances of the temple of the LORD and all its laws; and mark well those who may be admitted to^p the temple and all those who are to be excluded from the sanctuary. ⁶ And say to the rebellious house,^q to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God:

m Gk: Heb lacks high *x* Gk: Heb back
n Gk: Heb lacks one cubit high *o* Cn: Heb the LORD
p Cn: Heb the entrance of *q* Gk: Heb lacks house

"the bosom of the earth," with steps on the east leading to the *altar hearth*, "the mountain of God," like the Mesopotamian ziggurats (see Gen.11.4 n.). The total height of the altar is twelve cubits (20.68 feet). **18-26:** On the analogy of earlier consecratory rites (Ex.29.36-37; 40.1-38; Lev.8.14-15), the priests of Zadok (44.5-31) are to dedicate the altar.

44.1-31: Temple ordinances. 44.1-5: The outer east gate should remain closed, perhaps symbolizing its consecration by God's entrance and God's continued presence (43.7). The prince (see 37.15-28 n.) apparently entered from the temple side for the ceremonial meal (Lev.7.15; Dt.12.7), and thus the gate remained closed (compare 46.1). **6-9:** No more foreigners may

O house of Israel, let there be an end to all your abominations, ⁷ in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning it, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You^s have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. ⁸ And you have not kept charge of my holy things; but you have set foreigners to keep my charge in my sanctuary.

⁹ "Therefore^r thus says the Lord God: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary. ¹⁰ But the Levites who went far from me, going astray from me after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. ¹¹ They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple, and serving in the temple; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall attend on the people, to serve them. ¹² Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn concerning them, says the Lord God, that they shall bear their punishment. ¹³ They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near any of my sacred things and the things that are most sacred; but they shall bear their shame, because of the abominations which they have committed. ¹⁴ Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its service and all that is to be done in it.

¹⁵ "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of

my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me; and they shall attend on me to offer me the fat and the blood, says the Lord God; ¹⁶ they shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge. ¹⁷ When they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall wear linen garments; they shall have nothing of wool on them, while they minister at the gates of the inner court, and within. ¹⁸ They shall have linen turbans upon their heads, and linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat. ¹⁹ And when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments in which they have been ministering, and lay them in the holy chambers; and they shall put on other garments, lest they communicate holiness to the people with their garments. ²⁰ They shall not shave their heads or let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads. ²¹ No priest shall drink wine, when he enters the inner court. ²² They shall not marry a widow, or a divorced woman, but only a virgin of the stock of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest. ²³ They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. ²⁴ In a controversy they shall act as judges, and they shall judge it according to my judgments. They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts,

^r Gk: Heb *it my temple*

^s Gk Syr Vg: Heb *they*

ⁱ Gk: Heb *for you*

serve in the temple (Jos.9.23; Num.31.30,47), nor *uncircumcised* in heart (Dt.30.6; Lev.26.41; Jer.4.4). **10-14:** Because they had been party to Israel's apostasy, the Levites are demoted from being priests to temple servants (compare Dt.17.18-18.8). **15-31:** The priesthood. Solomon elevated *Zadok* to be chief priest after Abiathar's defection and banishment (2 Sam.15.24-29; 1 Kg.1.7-8; 2.26-27). 1 Chr.6.50-53 and 24.31 trace the lineage back to Eleazar, Aaron's son. Their present status is perhaps derived from Hilkiah's role in Josiah's reform (2 Kg.22.11-14; 23.4,24). **16:** *My table*, the table in the nave (41.22) or the altar. **17:** *Linen garments*, see 9.2 n. **19:** The care of the garments, compare 42.14; Hag.2.10-12. **20:** The care of the *hair*, Lev.21.5; Dt.14.1-2. **21:** *No wine* before service, Lev.10.9. **22:** Proper *marriage*, Lev.21.7,13-15. **23:** Teaching of the people, Lev.10.11. **24:** *Judges*, Dt.21.1-5. **25:** Defilement by a dead person,

and they shall keep my sabbaths holy.

²⁵ They shall not defile themselves by going near to a dead person; however, for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister they may defile themselves.

²⁶ After he is defiled,^u he shall count for himself seven days, and then he shall be clean.^v ²⁷ And on the day that he goes into the holy place, into the inner court, to minister in the holy place, he shall offer his sin offering, says the Lord God.

²⁸ "They shall have no" inheritance; I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession. ²⁹ They shall eat the cereal offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. ³⁰ And the first of all the first fruits of all kinds, and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings, shall belong to the priests; you shall also give to the priests the first of your coarse meal, that a blessing may rest on your house. ³¹ The priests shall not eat of anything, whether bird or beast, that has died of itself or is torn.

45 "When you allot the land as a possession, you shall set apart for the LORD a portion of the land as a holy district, twenty-five thousand cubits long and twenty* thousand cubits broad; it shall be holy throughout its whole extent. ² Of this a square plot of five hundred by five hundred cubits shall be for the sanctuary, with fifty cubits for an open space around it. ³ And in the holy district you shall measure off a section twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand broad, in which shall be the sanctuary, the most holy place. ⁴ It shall be the

holy portion of the land; it shall be for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and approach the LORD to minister to him; and it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. ⁵ Another section, twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand cubits broad, shall be for the Levites who minister at the temple, as their possession for cities to live in.^y

⁶ "Alongside the portion set apart as the holy district you shall assign for the possession of the city an area five thousand cubits broad, and twenty-five thousand cubits long; it shall belong to the whole house of Israel.

⁷ "And to the prince shall belong the land on both sides of the holy district and the property of the city, alongside the holy district and the property of the city, on the west and on the east, corresponding in length to one of the tribal portions, and extending from the western to the eastern boundary of the land. ⁸ It is to be his property in Israel. And my princes shall no more oppress my people; but they shall let the house of Israel have the land according to their tribes.

⁹ "Thus says the Lord God: Enough, O princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness; cease your evictions of my people, says the Lord God.

¹⁰ "You shall have just balances, a just ephah, and a just bath. ¹¹ The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, the bath containing one tenth of a homer, and the ephah one tenth of a homer; the homer shall be the

^u Syr: Heb *cleansed*

^v Syr: Heb *lacks and then he shall be clean*

^w Vg: Heb *as an* x Gk: Heb *ten*

^y Gk: Heb *twenty chambers*

Lev.21.1-3. **28:** *No inheritance*, Jos.13.14; Num.18.20-32. **29:** Eating sacrifices and *first fruits*, Lev.2.3-10; 6.14-18; Dt.18.3-5. **31:** Eating of unslaughtered *meat*, Lev.7.24.

45.1-9: The distribution of land (continued in 47.13-48.35) is completely idealistic. The *holy district* is divided into two sections, each 25,000 by 10,000 cubits; the northern section is for the Levites, the southern for the Zadokite priests. The latter included the five hundred cubit square section for the temple area plus an enclosure-space fifty cubits deep not mentioned earlier (42.20). The 25,000 by 5,000 cubit property of Jerusalem south of the holy district (v. 6) made with the holy district (v. 1) an area 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) square.

45.10-12: *Weights and measures*. For present-day equivalents of *bath*, *ephah*, *homer*, *shekel*,

standard measure.¹² The shekel shall be twenty gerahs; five shekels shall be five shekels, and ten shekels shall be ten shekels, and your mina shall be fifty shekels.^z

13 "This is the offering which you shall make: one sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat, and one sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley,¹⁴ and as the fixed portion of oil,^a one tenth of a bath from each cor (the cor,^b like the homer, contains ten baths);¹⁵ and one sheep from every flock of two hundred, from the families^c of Israel. This is the offering for cereal offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement for them, says the Lord God.¹⁶ All the people of the land shall give^d this offering to the prince in Israel.¹⁷ It shall be the prince's duty to furnish the burnt offerings, cereal offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the new moons, and the sabbaths, all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel: he shall provide the sin offerings, cereal offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel.

18 "Thus says the Lord God: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary.¹⁹ The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and the posts of the gate of the inner court.²⁰ You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month for any one who has sinned through error or ignorance; so you shall make atonement for the temple.

21 "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall

celebrate the feast of the passover, and for seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten.²² On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering.²³ And on the seven days of the festival he shall provide as a burnt offering to the LORD seven young bulls and seven rams without blemish, on each of the seven days; and a he-goat daily for a sin offering.²⁴ And he shall provide as a cereal offering an ephah for each bull, an ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil to each ephah.²⁵ In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month and for the seven days of the feast, he shall make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, and cereal offerings, and for the oil.

46 "Thus says the Lord God: The gate of the inner court that faces east shall be shut on the six working days; but on the sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened.² The prince shall enter by the vestibule of the gate from without, and shall take his stand by the post of the gate. The priests shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening.³ The people of the land shall worship at the entrance of that gate before the LORD on the sabbaths and on the new moons.⁴ The burnt offering that the prince offers to the LORD on the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish;⁵ and the cereal offering with

^z Gk: Heb twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, fifteen shekels shall be your mina

^a Cn: Heb oil, the bath the oil

^b Vg: Heb homer

^c Gk: Heb watering places

^d Gk Compare Syr: Heb shall be to

gerah, and mina, see pp. 1530-1531. 13-17: The people will bring token gifts to the prince, who, as their representative, will offer them to God.

45.18-25: Festival regulations: *passover* (Ex.23.15; Dt.16.1-8; Lev.23.4-8) and *tabernacles* (Ex.23.16; Dt.16.13-15; Lev.23.33-36); omitted are the festival of first fruits (Ex.23.16; Dt.16.9-12; Lev.23.15-21) and the day of atonement (Lev.23.26-32). 24: A hin, see p. 1530.

46.1-18: Regulations regarding the prince. 46.1-8: The prince (see 37.15-28 n.) shall bring his offerings (45.13-16) through the east gate of the inner court to its inner vestibule where he will stand (2 Kg.11.14) by the ritually cleansed doorway (45.18-19), while the priests offer

the ram shall be an ephah, and the cereal offering with the lambs shall be as much as he is able, together with a hin of oil to each ephah.⁶ On the day of the new moon he shall offer a young bull without blemish, and six lambs and a ram, which shall be without blemish;⁷ as a cereal offering he shall provide an ephah with the bull and an ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he is able, together with a hin of oil to each ephah.⁸ When the prince enters, he shall go in by the vestibule of the gate, and he shall go out by the same way.

9 "When the people of the land come before the LORD at the appointed feasts, he who enters by the north gate to worship shall go out by the south gate; and he who enters by the south gate shall go out by the north gate: no one shall return by way of the gate by which he entered, but each shall go out straight ahead.¹⁰ When they go in, the prince shall go in with them; and when they go out, he shall go out.

11 "At the feasts and the appointed seasons the cereal offering with a young bull shall be an ephah, and with a ram an ephah, and with the lambs as much as one is able to give, together with a hin of oil to an ephah.¹² When the prince provides a freewill offering, either a burnt offering or peace offerings as a freewill offering to the LORD, the gate facing east shall be opened for him; and he shall offer his burnt offering or his peace offerings as he does on the sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out the gate shall be shut.

13 "He shall provide a lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering to the LORD daily; morning by

morning he shall provide it.¹⁴ And he shall provide a cereal offering with it morning by morning, one sixth of an ephah, and one third of a hin of oil to moisten the flour, as a cereal offering to the LORD; this is the ordinance for the continual burnt offering.^e ¹⁵ Thus the lamb and the meal offering and the oil shall be provided, morning by morning, for a continual burnt offering.

16 "Thus says the Lord God: If the prince makes a gift to any of his sons out of his inheritance, it shall belong to his sons, it is their property by inheritance.¹⁷ But if he makes a gift out of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his to the year of liberty; then it shall revert to the prince; only his sons may keep a gift from his inheritance.¹⁸ The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them out of their property; he shall give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people shall be dispossessed of his property."

19 Then he brought me through the entrance, which was at the side of the gate, to the north row of the holy chambers for the priests; and there I saw a place at the extreme western end of them.²⁰ And he said to me, "This is the place where the priests shall boil the guilt offering and the sin offering, and where they shall bake the cereal offering, in order not to bring them out into the outer court and so communicate holiness to the people."

21 Then he brought me forth to the outer court, and led me to the four corners of the court; and in each corner of the court there was a court-

^e Cn: Heb perpetual ordinances continually
^f Gk: Heb it is his inheritance

the sacrifices on the altar directly ahead. The people stand in the outer court. For the sacrifices, see Ex.29.38-42; Num.28.3-15. *New moon*, first day of the month; note the increasingly strong emphasis on the sabbath. 9-10: The great festival crowds require regulations for controlled egress. 11-15: When the prince makes a *free-will offering* (Lev.22.18-23), the east gate (v. 1) will also be opened. The prince must also provide for daily sacrifices (Ex.29.38-42; 1 Kg.18.29; 2 Kg.16.15). 16-18: Crown property could not be disposed of permanently. When given to a non-relative, it had to be returned on the *year of liberty* (jubilee year, Lev.25.8-17).

46.19-20: The priests' quarters, see 42.1-14. *Communicate holiness*, see 42.14; 44.19. 21-24: The temple kitchens, for the common-meal sacrifices.

²² in the four corners of the court were small^g courts, forty cubits long and thirty broad; the four were of the same size. ²³ On the inside, around each of the four courts was a row of masonry, with hearths made at the bottom of the rows round about. ²⁴ Then he said to me, "These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple shall boil the sacrifices of the people."

47 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. ² Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me round on the outside to the outer gate, that faces toward the east;^h and the water was coming out on the south side.

³ Going on eastward with a line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. ⁴ Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the loins. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. ⁶ And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?"

Then he led me back along the bank of the river. ⁷ As I went back, I saw upon the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ And he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and

goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the stagnant waters of the sea,ⁱ the water will become fresh. ⁹ And wherever the river^j goes every living creature which swarms will live, and there will be very many fish; for this water goes there, that the waters of the sea^k may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. ¹⁰ Fishermen will stand beside the sea; from En-ge'di to En-eg'laim it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. ¹² And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

¹³ Thus says the Lord God: "These are the boundaries by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. ¹⁴ And you shall divide it equally; I swore to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance."

¹⁵ "This shall be the boundary of the land: On the north side, from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon to the entrance of Hamath, and on to Zedad,^l ¹⁶ Bero'thah, Sib'raim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer-hatticon,

^g Gk Syr Vg: The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^h Heb obscure

ⁱ Compare Syr: Heb into the sea to the sea those that were made to issue forth

^j Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb two rivers

^k Compare Syr: Heb Jacks the waters of the sea

^l Gk: Heb the entrance of Zedad, Hamath

47.1-12: The sacred river. This figure, known from Ugaritic (Canaanite) and Mesopotamian sources, is also found in J1.3.18; Zech.14.8; and Rev. ch. 22. From the throne of God (the temple; 43.7) issued the waters of life by which the saline waters of the Dead Sea become fresh, and in the desolate wilderness of Judah fruit trees flourish, making a new Paradise, as it were, and man (the Jews) will benefit. **8:** *Arabah*, the valley south of the Dead Sea. **10:** *En-ge'di to En-eg'laim* ('Ain Feshkha, about one and one-half miles south of Khirbet Qumran), northwest coast of the Dead Sea.

47.13-20: Israel's boundaries (Num.34.1-12): north, apparently that of David's empire in north Syria (2 Sam.8.5-12; Num.34.7-9); east, *Hazar-enon*, between Damascus and Palmyra,

which is on the border of Hauran.¹⁷ So the boundary shall run from the sea to Hazar-e'non, which is on the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north.^m This shall be the north side.

18 "On the east side, the boundary shall run from Hazar-e'non" between Hauran and Damascus;^m along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar.^o This shall be the east side.

19 "On the south side, it shall run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-ka'desh, thence along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. This shall be the south side.

20 "On the west side, the Great Sea shall be the boundary to a point opposite the entrance of Hamath. This shall be the west side.

21 "So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel.²² You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you and have begotten children among you. They shall be to you as native-born sons of Israel; with you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.²³ In whatever tribe the alien resides, there you shall assign him his inheritance, says the Lord God.

48 "These are the names of the tribes: Beginning at the northern border, from the sea by way^p of Hethlon to the entrance of Hamath, as far as Hazar-e'non (which is on the northern border of Damascus over against Hamath), and^q extending from the east side to the west,^r Dan, one portion.² Adjoining the territory

of Dan, from the east side to the west, Asher, one portion.³ Adjoining the territory of Asher, from the east side to the west, Naph'tali, one portion.⁴ Adjoining the territory of Naph'tali, from the east side to the west, Manas'seh, one portion.⁵ Adjoining the territory of Manas'seh, from the east side to the west, E'phraim, one portion.⁶ Adjoining the territory of E'phraim, from the east side to the west, Reuben, one portion.⁷ Adjoining the territory of Reuben, from the east side to the west, Judah, one portion.

8 "Adjoining the territory of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the portion which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits in breadth, and in length equal to one of the tribal portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the midst of it.⁹ The portion which you shall set apart for the LORD shall be twenty-five thousand cubits in length, and twenty^s thousand in breadth.¹⁰ These shall be the allotments of the holy portion: the priests shall have an allotment measuring twenty-five thousand cubits on the northern side, ten thousand cubits in breadth on the western side, ten thousand in breadth on the eastern side, and twenty-five thousand in length on the southern side, with the sanctuary of the LORD in the midst of it.¹¹ This shall be for the consecrated priests, the sons^t of Zadok, who kept my charge, who did not go astray

^m Heb obscure

ⁿ Cn: Heb lacks *Hazar-enon*

^o Compare Syr: Heb *you shall measure*

^p Compare 47.15: Heb *by the side of the way*

^q Cn: Heb *and they shall be his*

^r Gk Compare verses 2-8: Heb *the east side the west*

^s Compare 45.1: Heb *ten*

^t One Ms Gk: Heb *of the sons*

to the Dead Sea (Num.34.10-12); south, along the southern Negeb to the *Brook of Egypt* (Num.34.3-5); west, the Mediterranean Sea (Num.34.6). *Sibraim*, the same as Sepharvaim (see Is.36.19 n.). **21-23:** Proselytes (*aliens*) and Jews should be treated alike (Num.15.29; Lev. 19.33-34).

48.1-29: The allotment of the land. All tribes receive equal allotments west of the Jordan, with Ephraim and Manasseh each given a portion and Levi, as the priestly tribe (see Jos.14.3-4), omitted. This division of the country ignores geographical reality. **1-7:** Seven tribes north of the holy district, with Judah immediately contiguous to it. **1:** *Hethlon*, Heitala, east of Tripoli (47.15). *Entrance to Hamath*, territory between Riblah and Kadesh on the Orontes River. **8-22:** The properties of the Zadokite priests and the Levites, like that of the prince on either side, were to be held in perpetuity (45.1-9). The size of Jerusalem, with the surrounding open

when the people of Israel went astray, as the Levites did. ¹² And it shall belong to them as a special portion from the holy portion of the land, a most holy place, adjoining the territory of the Levites. ¹³ And alongside the territory of the priests, the Levites shall have an allotment twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in breadth. The whole length shall be twenty-five thousand cubits and the breadth twenty^u thousand. ¹⁴ They shall not sell or exchange any of it; they shall not alienate this choice portion of the land, for it is holy to the LORD.

¹⁵ "The remainder, five thousand cubits in breadth and twenty-five thousand in length, shall be for ordinary use for the city, for dwellings and for open country. In the midst of it shall be the city; ¹⁶ and these shall be its dimensions: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits, the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred. ¹⁷ And the city shall have open land: on the north two hundred and fifty cubits, on the south two hundred and fifty, on the east two hundred and fifty, and on the west two hundred and fifty. ¹⁸ The remainder of the length alongside the holy portion shall be ten thousand cubits to the east, and ten thousand to the west, and it shall be alongside the holy portion. Its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. ¹⁹ And the workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall till it. ²⁰ The whole portion which you shall set apart shall be twenty-five thousand cubits square, that is, the holy portion together with the property of the city.

²¹ "What remains on both sides of the holy portion and of the property of the city shall belong to the prince.

Extending from the twenty-five thousand cubits of the holy portion to the east border, and westward from the twenty-five thousand cubits to the west border, parallel to the tribal portions, it shall belong to the prince. The holy portion with the sanctuary of the temple in its midst, ²² and the property of the Levites and the property of the city,^v shall be in the midst of that which belongs to the prince. The portion of the prince shall lie between the territory of Judah and the territory of Benjamin.

²³ "As for the rest of the tribes: from the east side to the west, Benjamin, one portion. ²⁴ Adjoining the territory of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon, one portion. ²⁵ Adjoining the territory of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Is'sachar, one portion. ²⁶ Adjoining the territory of Is'sachar, from the east side to the west, Zeb'ulun, one portion. ²⁷ Adjoining the territory of Zeb'ulun, from the east side to the west, Gad, one portion. ²⁸ And adjoining the territory of Gad to the south, the boundary shall run from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-ka'desh, thence along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. ²⁹ This is the land which you shall allot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their several portions, says the Lord God.

³⁰ "These shall be the exits of the city: On the north side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits by measure, ³¹ three gates, the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah, and the gate of Levi, the gates of the city being named after the tribes of Israel. ³² On the east side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates, the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benja-

^u Gk: Heb *ten*

^v Cn: Heb and from the property of the Levites and from the property of the city

area, was exactly ten times that of the temple (42.20), i.e. 5,000 cubits square (1.6 miles). **15:** *Ordinary use*, see 22.26; 42.20; 44.23. **23-29:** Five tribes south of Jerusalem and the holy district beginning with Benjamin.

48.30-35: The new Jerusalem. Three gates on each of the city's four sides, with each gate named after a tribe, including Levi, and with Ephraim and Manasseh combined in Joseph

min, and the gate of Dan. ³³ On the south side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits by measure, three gates, the gate of Simeon, the gate of Is'sachar, and the gate of Zeb'ulun. ³⁴ On the west side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits, three

gates,^w the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher, and the gate of Naph'tali. ³⁵ The circumference of the city shall be eighteen thousand cubits. And the name of the city henceforth shall be, The LORD is there."

^w One Ms Gk Syr: Heb *their gates three*

(compare Rev.21.12-14). **35:** The new city receives a new name (Is.62.2), "The LORD is there" (Yahweh-shammah); for other names see Jer.3.17; Zech.8.3; Is.1.26 n.; 60.14 (compare Jer. 23.6).

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The six stories and four dream-visions of the book of Daniel make up the first great work of apocalyptic, later examples of which are 1 Enoch, Syriac Baruch, and the New Testament book of Revelation. These apocalypses come from times of national or community tribulation, and are not actual history, but, through symbols and signs, are interpretations of current history with its background and predictions of a future where tribulations and sorrows will give place to triumph and peace. The Apocalyptists usually set forth their messages under the name of some ancient worthy, e.g. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, or some other figure of note.

This book appears under the name of Daniel, or Dan'el, a worthy twice referred to in Ezekiel (Ezek.14.14; 28.3), and whose name appears also in the North Canaanite clay-tablet texts found at Ras Shamra. The author was a pious Jew living under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, 167-164 B.C. (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," §15). To encourage his suffering fellow-believers he tells six stories, set in earlier days in Babylon just before and just after the Persian conquest, which illustrate how faithful Jews, loyally practicing their religion, were enabled by divine aid to triumph over their enemies. Then in four visions he ventures to interpret current history and predict the coming consummation when the "saints" will have ultimate victory. His book was originally written in Aramaic, and the section from 2.4b to 7.28 is still in Aramaic, though the remainder is now in Hebrew.

IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF Jehoi'akim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoi'akim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. ³ Then the king commanded Ash'penaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters and language of the Chalde'ans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the rich food which the king ate, and of the wine which he drank. They were to be educated

for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hanani'ah he called Shadrach, Mish'a-el he called Meshach, and Azari'ah he called Abed'nego.

⁸ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's rich food, or with the wine which he drank; therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹ And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs; ¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear lest my lord the king, who appointed your food and your drink, should see that you were in poorer condition than the youths who are of your own

1.1-21: Daniel and his friends. A story to teach how faithful observance of the law is rewarded. **1:** The *third year* of Jehoiakim was 606 B.C. *Nebuchadnezzar* is a Jewish form of the name Nabuchadrezzar, who in 597 B.C. carried away temple treasure and captives to Babylon (2 Kg.24.10-15), in v. 2 called by the ancient name *Shinar* (Gen.10.10; Is.11.11). **2:** *His god* at Babylon was Marduk. **3-5:** Promising *youths* among the captives were trained for *three years* to be royal pages. **6:** As such they were given Babylonian names and provided with food and drink from the royal table. **8:** *Defile himself*, i.e. by eating food not permitted by Jewish dietary laws. **10:** *Poorer condition*, lit. "your faces looking sorrowful." **20:** *Magicians and enchanters*

age. So you would endanger my head with the king.”¹¹ Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hanani’ah, Mish’a-el, and Azari’ah;¹² “Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.”¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king’s rich food be observed by you, and according to what you see deal with your servants.”¹⁴ So he hearkened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.¹⁵ At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king’s rich food.¹⁶ So the steward took away their rich food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all letters and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hanani’ah, Mish’a-el, and Azari’ah; therefore they stood before the king.²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.²¹ And Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

2 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchad-

nez’zar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.² Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chalde’ans be summoned, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.³ And the king said to them, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.”⁴ Then the Chalde’ans said to the king,^a “O king, live for ever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.”⁵ The king answered the Chalde’ans, “The word from me is sure: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.”⁶ But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.”⁷ They answered a second time, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.”⁸ The king answered, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is sure⁹ that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.”¹⁰ The Chalde’ans answered the king, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king’s demand; for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chal-

^a Heb adds *in Aramaic*, indicating that the text from this point to the end of chapter 7 is in Aramaic

here probably stand merely as names for court sages whose learning and wisdom were surpassed by that divinely given to Daniel and his friends (v. 17). **21:** The *first year of Cyrus* at Babylon was 538 B.C. (Ezra 1.1), almost seventy years after Daniel’s coming to Babylon.

2.1–49: Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. A story to teach the feebleness of human wisdom compared with that conferred by God. **1:** *Second year* is a slip (compare “third year” in 1.5–6,17,20). **2:** *Chaldeans* here means not an ethnic group but a caste of wise men. In ancient as in modern times it was believed that important matters were revealed in *dreams* (Gen.20.3; 41.1–32; Mt.27.19). **4–11:** Cuneiform tablets on divination through dreams are still extant. If the king would *tell* the dream they could consult dream-books and find the interpretation, but asking them to *show* the dream itself was unheard of and *difficult* beyond human skill. **11:** The word

de'an. ¹¹ The thing that the king asks is difficult, and none can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

¹² Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. ¹³ So the decree went forth that the wise men were to be slain, and they sought Daniel and his companions, to slay them. ¹⁴ Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Ar'ioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to slay the wise men of Babylon; ¹⁵ he said to Ar'ioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so severe?" Then Ar'ioch made the matter known to Daniel. ¹⁶ And Daniel went in and besought the king to appoint him a time, that he might show to the king the interpretation.

¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah, his companions, ¹⁸ and told them to seek mercy of the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹ Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰ Daniel said:

"Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever.
to whom belong wisdom and
might.

²¹ He changes times and seasons;
he removes kings and sets up
kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those who have
understanding;

²² he reveals deep and mysterious
things;
he knows what is in the darkness,
and the light dwells with him.

²³ To thee, O God of my fathers,
I give thanks and praise,
for thou hast given me wisdom and
strength,
and hast now made known to me
what we asked of thee,
for thou hast made known to us
the king's matter."

²⁴ Therefore Daniel went in to Ar'ioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and said thus to him, "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

²⁵ Then Ar'ioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who can make known to the king the interpretation."

²⁶ The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazz'zar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?"

²⁷ Daniel answered the king, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery which the king has asked, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezz'zar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: ²⁹ To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be hereafter, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. ³⁰ But as for me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living has this mystery been revealed to me, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

³¹ "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frighten-

gods is used, since these Chaldeans were polytheists. **14:** On the ground of 1.20, Daniel and his friends were counted among the court's *wise men*. In what follows, Daniel represents the ideal sage. **18:** This is a *mystery*, but through prayer even mysteries may be *revealed* by God's wisdom (v. 30). **26:** *Belteshazzar*, as 1.7; 4.8,9. **28:** *In the latter day* is eschatological, referring to the end of this present world, a matter known only to God. **33:** *Legs*, i.e. the lower legs, the

ing.³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces;³⁵ then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

36 "This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation.³⁷ You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,³⁸ and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the sons of men, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.³⁹ After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.⁴⁰ And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things; and like iron which crushes, it shall break and crush all these.⁴¹ And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the miry clay.⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly

clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.⁴³ As you saw the iron mixed with miry clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage,^b but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever;⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and did homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.⁴⁹ Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel remained at the king's court.

3 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was

b Aram by the seed of men

upper legs being the *thighs*. 34: The image was of human construction, but the *stone* was quarried supernaturally. This could become a *mountain* filling the *whole earth* because the earth was pictured as a disk beneath the heavenly vault. 36-45: For this writer the five kingdoms are the Babylonian, Median, Persian, Greek, and the coming universal kingdom of God. 41: The declining strength of the fourth kingdom means the divided kingdoms of the Seleucids and Ptolemies (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," §14) whose rulers, though they intermarried, did not hold together. 46-49: That the king *did homage* to Daniel, recognized his God, and gave him and his friends *honors*, was to symbolize how oppressing nations would presently treat Israel.

3.1-30: The three youths in the fiery furnace. A story to show how martyrdom is preferable to apostasy. 1: Huge *images* of deities were common in ancient times. This one was gold-

sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ² Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to assemble the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ³ Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, were assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴ And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵ that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; ⁶ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." ⁷ Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. ⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live for ever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image; ¹¹ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. ¹² There

are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no heed to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. Then they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? ¹⁵ Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. ²⁰ And he ordered certain mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the

^c Or Behold, our God . . . king. Or If our God is able to deliver us, he will deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king.

placed. *Dura* is unidentifiable. **2:** Ceremonies of *dedication* are well attested (1 Kg.8.63; 2 Chr. 7.9; Neh.12.27; and title of Ps. 30), at which *officials* were expected to appear, for they represented the various *peoples, nations, languages* of the kingdom. **5:** The *trigon* was a stringed instrument. The meaning of the Aramaic word translated *bagpipe* is uncertain; some think it means a drum. **6:** Punishment by burning alive was not uncommon (Gen.38.24; Jos.7.15). The *furnace* was the local kiln-type oven, with openings at top and at ground level. **19:** The

burning fiery furnace. ²¹ Then these men were bound in their mantles,^d their tunics,^d their hats, and their other garments, and they were cast into the burning fiery furnace. ²² Because the king's order was strict and the furnace very hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." ²⁵ He answered, "But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego, servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego came out from the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their mantles^d were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set at nought the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their

own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego in the province of Babylon.

⁴ King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ² It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has wrought toward me.

³ How great are his signs,
how mighty his wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting
kingdom,
and his dominion is from
generation to generation.

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. ⁵ I had a dream which made me afraid; as I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. ⁶ Therefore I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chalde'ans, and the astrologers came in; and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. ⁸ At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods^e—and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹ "O Belteshazzar,

^d The meaning of the Aramaic word is uncertain

^e Ch 3.31 in Aram ^f Ch 4.1 in Aram

^g Or Spirit of the holy God

seven times is merely rhetorical. **21:** Usually victims were stripped; the binding and clothing here heightens the miracle of their deliverance. **22:** They were cast in at the top opening, flames from which *slew* the soldiers. The king was looking into the ground level opening and saw where they fell. **25:** *A son of the gods*; a celestial being (v. 28). **26:** They emerged from the ground level opening. **29:** This dismemberment of person and property was not uncommon punishment (2.5).

4.1-37: Nebuchadnezzar's madness. A story to show how helpless is the greatest heathen power against Israel's God. **1:** Many ancient monarchs imagined they ruled *all the earth*. **6:** As in 2.2 court sages are expected to be skilled interpreters of dreams. **9:** For Daniel's office

chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods^g is in you and that no mystery is difficult for you, here is^h the dream which I saw; tell me its interpretation. ¹⁰ The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth; and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹² Its leaves were fair and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the air dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

¹³ "I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ¹⁴ He cried aloud and said thus, 'Hew down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit; let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven; let his lot be with the beasts in the grass of the earth; ¹⁶ let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven times pass over him. ¹⁷ The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will, and sets over it the lowliest of men.' ¹⁸ This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshaz'zar, declare the interpretation, because all

the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy godsⁱ is in you."

¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshaz'zar, was dismayed for a moment, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king said, "Belteshaz'zar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshaz'zar answered, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! ²⁰ The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth; ²¹ whose leaves were fair and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all; under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the air dwelt— ²² it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. ²³ And whereas the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Hew down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field; and let him be wet with the dew of heaven; and let his lot be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him'; ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, ²⁵ that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; you shall be made to eat grass

^g Or Spirit of the holy God

^h Cn: Aram visions of

ⁱ Or Spirit of the holy God

compare 2.48; 5.11. What the *spirit of the holy gods* (v. 18; 5.11) means is quite obscure. **10:** *Tree*, see Ezek.31.3–14. It is the world-tree at the center of the earth disk, whose branches touch the heavenly vault and stretch in all directions to where this vault touches the rim of the disk (see 2.34 n.). **13,17,23:** The *watcher* was a celestial being (see, in the pseudepigraphic literature, 1 Enoch 12.2,3; Jubilees 4.15), who *cried aloud* to his attendants (v. 14); such celestial beings, as a kind of heavenly council, execute the sentence given by God. **16:** The *seven times* means a conventional number of years. **19:** *Dismayed*, i.e. embarrassed and perplexed, so he uses a stereotyped formula of aversion. **22:** The tree is *you*, for a tree not uncommonly symbolized a man (Pss.1.3; 37.35; Jer.17.8). **25:** The king will suffer temporarily from "insania zoanthropia," a form of insanity in which a man acts like a beast (v. 33). History knows of no

like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will.

²⁶ And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be sure for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules.

²⁷ Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you; break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your tranquillity."

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ and the king said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" ³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and you shall be made to eat grass like an ox; and seven times shall pass over you, until you have learned that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." ³³ Immediately the word was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men, and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

34 At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven,

and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives for ever;

for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;

³⁵ all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing;
and he does according to his will in the host of heaven
and among the inhabitants of the earth;

and none can stay his hand
or say to him, "What doest thou?"

³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to abase.

5 King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in front of the thousand.

2 Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. ³ Then they brought in the golden and silver vessels which had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his

j Theodotion Vg: Aram golden vessels

such affliction affecting Nebuchadnezzar, but some later tale may have associated it with him. The tale may have originally been told of Nabonidus, to judge from a Dead Sea Scroll text. **30:** Nebuchadnezzar had a reputation as a builder. **36:** His *counselors* were his ministers of state, his *lords* his courtiers.

5.1-31: Belshazzar's feast. A story to show that divine punishment is visited on sacrilege. **1:** *Belshazzar*, son of Nabonidus the last Neo-Babylonian ruler, was only viceroy during his father's absences. *Great feast* probably means a state banquet. **2:** For the *vessels* see 1.2; Ezra 1.7-11. *His father*, i.e. his predecessor, for three kings ruled between Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus. From vv. 11,13,18,22, however, we see that this writer thought Nebuchadnezzar

concubines drank from them. ⁴ They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

⁵ Immediately the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand; and the king saw the hand as it wrote. ⁶ Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. ⁷ The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chalde'ans, and the astrologers. The king said to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

⁸ Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. ⁹ Then King Belshaz'zar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed; and his lords were perplexed.

¹⁰ The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquetting hall; and the queen said, "O king, live for ever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. ¹¹ There is in your kingdom a man in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.^k In the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chalde'ans, and astrologers,^l ¹² because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king said to Daniel, "You are that Daniel, one of the exiles

of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. ¹⁴ I have heard of you that the spirit of the holy gods^k is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. ¹⁵ Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation; but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. ¹⁶ But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty; ¹⁹ and because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. ²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him; ²¹ he was driven from among men, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will. ²² And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart,

^k Or Spirit of the holy God

^l Aram repeats the king your father

was his real father. **4:** During the drinking, libations were poured out to heathen deities. **5:** This sacrilege brought forth the fingers of a man's hand writing a message of doom. **7:** The writing, we learn from v. 25, was Aramaic, but the message was cryptic and needed interpretation. **Third ruler** means he would rank third in the kingdom. **10-11:** The queen was the queen-

though you knew all this, ²³ but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven; and the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

24 "Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. ²⁵ And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. ²⁶ This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; ²⁷ TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; ²⁸ PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

29 Then Belshaz'zar commanded, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put about his neck, and proclamation was made concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30 That very night Belshaz'zar the Chalde'an king was slain. ³¹ And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

6 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three presi-

dents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom; but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵ Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

6 Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement^m to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live for ever! ⁷ All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict.

m Or thronging

mother. 25-28: All three words represent weights, *mene* a mina, *tekell* a shekel, *parsin* two half-minas, but they may also be read as the verbs "to number," "to weigh," and "to divide." So the meaning may be that Evil-merodach, who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar, weighs a mina, his successor Neriglissar also a mina, his successor Labashi-Marduk only a shekel, Nabonidus and Belshazzar half a mina each, but that now by the judgment of numbering, weighing, and dividing the Neo-Babylonian kingdom is to be conquered by the Medo-Persians. 31: No such person as *Darius the Mede* is known to history. It was Cyrus who overthrew the Neo-Babylonian power. Perhaps it means Cyrus's general Gobyras, who was about sixty-two.

6.1-28: Daniel in the lions' den. A story to show how God will deliver his faithful servants. 1: Darius I set up the satrapies (i.e. provinces, each governed by a satrap), but *Darius* here means the Mede of 5.31. Jewish tradition increased the twenty-odd satrapies into over one hundred and twenty (Est.1.1; 8.9). 2-5: Each satrap had a military chief and a civil secretary, these being the *three presidents*. The king, however, planned to appoint Daniel as grand vizier. From this pinnacle jealous fellow officials seek to topple him, using his religion as their lever. 7: Their request is that for a month the king should be treated as divine. From vv. 17,23,24 it appears that the *den* was thought of as a pit. 8: For the unchangeableness of Medo-Persian

10 When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.¹¹ Then these men came by agreement^m and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that any man who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked."¹³ Then they answered before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no heed to you, O king, or the interdict you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed, and set his mind to deliver Daniel; and he labored till the sun went down to rescue him.¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement^m to the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance which the king establishes can be changed."

16 Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!"¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace, and spent

the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

19 Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions.²⁰ When he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish and said to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live for ever!²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong."²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God.²⁴ And the king commanded, and those men who had accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you.²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

for he is the living God,
enduring for ever;
his kingdom shall never be
destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the
end.

²⁷ He delivers and rescues,
he works signs and wonders

m Or thronging

law see Est.1.19; 8.8. 10: Daniel had a roof-chamber with windows allowing him to face Jerusalem in prayer (1 Kg.8.44,48). For the three daily prayers see Ps.55.17, and for kneeling 2 Chr.6.13; Ezra 9.5; Acts 20.36. 14: The monarch sees through the conspiracy but is helpless. 17: The pit was sealed by affixing the royal seal to cords across the stone. 22: For shutting the lions' mouths see 1 Macc.2.60; Heb.11.33. 24: Well recognized family solidarity is involved here, as punishment falls also on the families of the accusers (compare Num.16.25-33; Jos.7.24;

in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions."

28 So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

7 In the first year of Belshazz'zar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, and told the sum of the matter. ² Daniel said, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. ³ And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. ⁴ The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand upon two feet like a man; and the mind of a man was given to it. ⁵ And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side; it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' ⁶ After this I looked, and lo, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back; and the beast had four heads; and dominion was given to it. ⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrible and dreadful and exceedingly strong; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. ⁸ I considered the horns,

and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. ⁹ As I looked,

thrones were placed

and one that was ancient of days
took his seat;

his raiment was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure
wool;

his throne was fiery flames,
its wheels were burning fire.

¹⁰ A stream of fire issued
and came forth from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten
thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.

¹¹ I looked then because of the sound of the great words which the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

¹³ I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of
heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.

¹⁴ And to him was given dominion
and glory and kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and
languages

2 Sam.21.6,9; Est.9.13). **28:** Cyrus, whose reign over Babylon began in 538 B.C., was the first Iranian to rule there, but this writer obviously thinks of his *Darius the Mede* as preceding him.

7.1-28: The vision of the four beasts. A vision of the passing of kingdoms to make way for the kingdom of God. **1:** *The first year*, i.e. 554 B.C., when he began to act as viceroy for his father. *The sum*, i.e. the main substance. **2:** In accord with the view that there were four kingdoms (see ch. 2), *four* winds appropriately introduce the beasts symbolizing these kingdoms. **4-8:** The winged lion represents the Babylonian empire, the bear the Medes, the four-headed winged leopard the Persians, the dragon-like beast the Greeks, whose ten horns represent the ten rulers who succeeded Alexander. The *little horn* (compare 8.9) is Antiochus Epiphanes, who gained his throne by uprooting others. **9-14: The divine judgment.** God, the Ancient One, appears on his fiery throne surrounded by his court (1 Kg.22.19); the record books are examined and judgment is given. **11-12:** The Greek empire will be destroyed, but the remnant of the others will continue until absorbed into the final kingdom. **13-14:** God will then give

should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting
dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.

15 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious and the visions of my head alarmed me. ¹⁶ I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me, and made known to me the interpretation of the things. ¹⁷ 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, for ever and ever.'

19 "Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrible, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze; and which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up and before which three of them fell, the horn which had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and which seemed greater than its fellows. ²¹ As I looked, this horn made war with the saints, and prevailed over them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints received the kingdom.

23 "Thus he said: 'As for the fourth beast,
there shall be a fourth kingdom on
earth,
which shall be different from all
the kingdoms,
and it shall devour the whole
earth,

and trample it down, and break
it to pieces.

²⁴ As for the ten horns,
out of this kingdom
ten kings shall arise,
and another shall arise after them;
he shall be different from the former
ones,

and shall put down three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak words against the
Most High,
and shall wear out the saints of the
Most High,
and shall think to change the
times and the law;
and they shall be given into his hand
for a time, two times, and half a
time.

²⁶ But the court shall sit in judgment,
and his dominion shall be taken
away,
to be consumed and destroyed to
the end.

²⁷ And the kingdom and the
dominion
and the greatness of the kingdoms
under the whole heaven
shall be given to the people of
the saints of the Most High;
their kingdom shall be an
everlasting kingdom,
and all dominions shall serve and
obey them.'

28 "Here is the end of the matter.
As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly
alarmed me, and my color changed;
but I kept the matter in my mind."

8 In the third year of the reign of
King Belshaz'zar a vision ap-
peared to me, Daniel, after that which
appeared to me at the first. ² And I
saw in the vision; and when I saw, I
was in Susa the capital, which is in the
province of Elam; and I saw in the
vision, and I was at the river U'lai.
³ I raised my eyes and saw, and be-

the messianic king a universal and *everlasting* dominion. **16:** At the seer's request an angel gives him the *interpretation*. **21:** Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted the righteous (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," §15). **25-28:** Catalogue of Antiochus' enormities with prediction of their end after three and a half years (i.e. *a time, two times, and a half a time*; compare 8.14; 9.27; 12.7,11,12). After his end the expected messianic kingdom will be established.

8.1-27: The vision of the ram and the he-goat. **1-2:** The vision is dated two years later than the previous one (7.1), placing the seer in *Susa*, the winter capital of the Persian kings. The *Ulai*

hold, a ram standing on the bank of the river. It had two horns; and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. ⁴I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward; no beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power; he did as he pleased and magnified himself.

⁵As I was considering, behold, a he-goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. ⁶He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the river, and he ran at him in his mighty wrath. ⁷I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns; and the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled upon him; and there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power. ⁸Then the he-goat magnified himself exceedingly; but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

⁹Out of one of them came forth a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land. ¹⁰It grew great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them. ¹¹It magnified itself, even up to the Prince of the host; and the continual burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his

sanctuary was overthrown. ¹²And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt offering through transgression; and truth was cast down to the ground, and the horn acted and prospered. ¹³Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to the one that spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot?" ¹⁴And he said to him, ^p"For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

¹⁵When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. ¹⁶And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the U'lai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." ¹⁷So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I was frightened and fell upon my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end."

¹⁸As he was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and set me on my feet. ¹⁹He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation; for it pertains to the appointed time of the end. ²⁰As for the ram which you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹And the he-goat^q is the king of Greece; and the

ⁿ Heb obscure ^o Heb obscure
^p Theodotion Gk Syr Vg: Heb me
^q Or shaggy he-goat

is the Eulaeus. 3-4: The two-horned ram is the Medo-Persian empire (v. 20), the advance of the Persians being irresistible. 5-7: The he-goat from the west is Alexander the Great (v. 21), who overthrew the Persian empire. 8: Alexander's empire was divided, the four conspicuous leaders being Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. 9-14: From the Seleucids sprang Antiochus Epiphanes who in 167 B.C. conquered Palestine, violated the *sanctuary*, and prohibited worship there (vv. 23-25; see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," §15). The angels comment and calculate that this will continue about three and a half years (*two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings* are one thousand, one hundred and fifty days; see 7.25-28 n.). The *sanctuary* was restored on 25th Chislew (December 14th) 164 B.C. 16: A man's voice i.e. a celestial being speaking human language. 17: The end, compare v. 19; 11.35; 12.4,9,13. 23-24:

great horn between his eyes is the first king.²² As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his^r nation, but not with his power.

²³ And at the latter end of their rule, when the transgressors have reached their full measure, a king of bold countenance, one who understands riddles, shall arise.²⁴ His power shall be great,^s and he shall cause fearful destruction, and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people of the saints.²⁵ By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall magnify himself. Without warning he shall destroy many; and he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes; but, by no human hand, he shall be broken.²⁶ The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true; but seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence."

27 And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days; then I rose and went about the king's business; but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasu-e-rus, by birth a Mede, who became king over the realm of the Chalde'ans—² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years which, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.⁴ I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying,

"O Lord, the great and terrible God, who keepest covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,⁵ we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from thy commandments and ordinances;⁶ we have not listened to thy servants the prophets, who spoke in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.⁷ To thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us confusion of face, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those that are near and those that are far away, in all the lands to which thou hast driven them, because of the treachery which they have committed against thee.⁸ To us, O Lord, belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness; because we have rebelled against him,¹⁰ and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.¹¹ All Israel has transgressed thy law and turned aside, refusing to obey thy voice. And the curse and oath which are written in the law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.¹² He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done the like of what has been done against Jerusalem.¹³ As it is written in the law

^r Theodotion Gk Vg: Heb the

^s Theodotion and Beatty papyrus of Gk: Heb repeats but not with his power from verse 22

The shameless insolence, "double talk," and ruthlessness of Antiochus were notorious. *The saints* are the godly Jews (7.25,27). **25:** *The Prince of princes* is God, to whom Antiochus' self-deification (11.36) was an affront, and by whom he was *broken* (2 Macc.9.5). **26-27:** Since Daniel is pictured as being in Susa in 552 B.C., and the vision concerns events of 164, the account is to be preserved for that time, for naturally Daniel did not understand it.

9.1-27: The prophecy of the seventy weeks, expounding a prophecy of Jeremiah. **1:** According to this writer's chronology the *first year of Darius* the Mede was 538 B.C. *Ahasuerus* means Xerxes, a fictitious parent for a fictitious Darius. **2:** The *seventy years* are referred to in Jer. 25.11,12; 29.10. **4-19:** With Daniel's prayer of confession compare Neh. chs. 1 and 9. **11:** For

of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us, yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and giving heed to thy truth. ¹⁴ Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. ¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, who didst bring thy people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast made thee a name, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. ¹⁶ O Lord, according to all thy righteous acts, let thy anger and thy wrath turn away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy hill; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people have become a byword among all who are round about us. ¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, hearken to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplications, and for thy own sake, O Lord, cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline thy ear and hear; open thy eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of thy great mercy. ¹⁹ O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, give heed and act; delay not, for thy own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for

the holy hill of my God; ²¹ while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He came" and he said to me, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding. ²³ At the beginning of your supplications a word went forth, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

24 "Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place."^v ²⁵ Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. ²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its^w end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes deso-

t Theodotion Vg Compare Syr: Heb for the Lord's sake
u Gk Syr: Heb made to understand
v Or thing or one w Or his

this curse see Dt.28.15-45. 13: For what was written see Lev.26.14-22. 17: The desolate sanctuary is a hint of Antiochus' "abomination of desolation" (v. 27; 8.13; see 11.29-31 n.). 21: Gabriel is called the man because he appeared in human form (8.15). 24: Jeremiah's seventy years (see v. 2. n.) mean *seventy weeks of years*, or 490 years (i.e. 70 × 7 years), after which the messianic kingdom will come, fulfilling both *vision and prophet*. 25-27: As we do not know his date for the *going forth of the word*, we can only guess that his princely *anointed one* may have been Cyrus, or Zerubbabel, or Jeshua, and the one *cut off* Philopator, or Jason, or Onias III. The *prince who is to come* is doubtless Antiochus, who wrought such *desolation*, made a *covenant* with the Hellenizing Jews, and offered the *abominations* of heathen sacrifice in the temple. *Seven weeks*, i.e. forty-nine years. *Sixty-two weeks*, i.e. 434 years. *One week*, i.e. seven years. *Half a week*, i.e. three and one-half years; see 7.25-28 n.

late, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshaz'zar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. **3** I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. **4** On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, **5** I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphaz. **6** His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude. **7** And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. **8** So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me; my radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. **9** Then I heard the sound of his words; and when I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in a deep sleep with my face to the ground.

10 And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. **11** And he said to me, “O

Daniel, man greatly beloved, give heed to the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” While he was speaking this word to me, I stood up trembling. **12** Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. **13** The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia^x **14** and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”

15 When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was dumb. **16** And behold, one in the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. **17** How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.”

18 Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. **19** And he said, “O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.” And when he spoke to me,

^x Theodotion Compare Gk: Heb *I was left there with the kings of Persia*

10.1-21: A vision of the last days (which continues through 12.13, ch. 10 being prologue, ch. 11 the vision, ch. 12 the epilogue). **1:** *The third year of Cyrus*, 535 B.C. For the first conflict see v. 13. **4:** *Tigris* is a gloss on *great river*, for Babylon is on the Euphrates. **5:** The man was a celestial being, probably Gabriel, in human form, but having angelic splendor. *Uphaz*, see Jer.10.9. **7:** His companions did not see the vision but were affected by the supernatural presence, as in Acts 9.7. **12-13:** *Michael . . . came to help*, as in 9.21-23 Gabriel is God's response to supplication. Conflict in heaven among the angelic patrons of the nations had delayed his coming three weeks, and he got away because *Michael*, the Jews' patron angel (v. 21), had helped him against the patron angel of Persia. In vv. 20-21 he says he must return, when he expects to be involved with the patron angel of Greece also. That they *withstood* him suggests they did not want Daniel to be told the things which were *to befall* the Jews in *days yet to come*.

I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." ²⁰ Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I am through with him, lo, the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, **||** your prince. ¹ And as for me, in **||** the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

2 "And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia; and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them; and when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. ³ Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will. ⁴ And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.

5 "Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and his dominion shall be a great dominion. ⁶ After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make peace; but she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and

his offspring shall not endure; but she shall be given up, and her attendants, her child, and he who got possession of her.

7 "In those times a branch^z from her roots shall arise in his place; he shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail. ⁸ He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their molten images and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. ⁹ Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return into his own land.

10 "His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall come on and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. ¹¹ Then the king of the south, moved with anger, shall come out and fight with the king of the north; and he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. ¹² And when the multitude is taken, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. ¹³ For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the former; and after some years^a he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.

14 "In those times many shall rise against the king of the south; and the

y Or supported
z Gk: Heb from a branch
a Heb at the end of the times years

11.1-12.13: Interpretation of the vision of history unfolding. 1: The angel had been the guardian angel of *Darius the Mede* and now, treating Daniel as an official of Cyrus, proceeds to unfold history. 2: If the *three more* are those after Cyrus they are probably Cambyses, Darius I, and Xerxes I, who warred with the Greeks. Some suggest that Darius III, the last king of Persia, is the *fourth*; others believe Artaxerxes is meant. 3: The *mighty king* is Alexander the Great. 4: For his kingdom broken into four, see 8.8 n. None of his successors were of *his posterity*. 5: The kings of the *south* are the Ptolemies, those of the *north* the Seleucids. Here the *king* is Ptolemy I, and the prince who was *stronger* is Seleucus I. 6: The *alliance* was that of about 250 B.C., when Ptolemy II gave his daughter Bernice to Antiochus II; but Bernice, her *attendants*, her *child*, and her husband fell, owing to the plotting of Laodice, mother of Seleucus II. 7-8: The *branch* is Ptolemy III, who captured the *fortress* of Seleucia and brought back immense booty. 9: A reference to the campaign of Seleucus II against Egypt in 242 B.C., which came to disaster. 10: *His sons* were Seleucus III and Antiochus III, the latter of whom attacked Egypt. 11-13: Ptolemy IV sent armies through Palestine and defeated Antiochus at

men of violence among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfil the vision; but they shall fail.

¹⁵ Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks, and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his picked troops, for there shall be no strength to stand. ¹⁶ But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land, and all of it shall be in his power. ¹⁷ He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of peace^b and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom;^c but it shall not stand or be to his advantage. ¹⁸ Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many of them; but a commander shall put an end to his insolence; indeed^d he shall turn his insolence back upon him. ¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

²⁰ "Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute through the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle. ²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given; he shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. ²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, and the prince

of the covenant also. ²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully; and he shall become strong with a small people. ²⁴ Without warning he shall come into the richest parts^e of the province; and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. ²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. ²⁶ Even those who eat his rich food shall be his undoing; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷ And as for the two kings, their minds shall be bent on mischief; they shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail; for the end is yet to be at the time appointed. ²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great substance, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will, and return to his own land.

²⁹ "At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south; but it shall not be this time as it was before. ³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and

b Gk: Heb *upright ones* c Heb *her or it*
d Heb *obscure* e Or *among the richest men*

Raphia, but Antiochus in turn crushed the Egyptians at Baniās. **14:** A reference to the Egyptian insurrections under the child king, Ptolemy V. **15-17:** Antiochus III campaigned against Egypt, taking possession of Palestine, then made peace with Egypt, sealing it by marrying his daughter to the youthful Ptolemy. **18-19:** Antiochus undertook a campaign to capture the *coast lands* of Asia Minor, but, checked by the Roman *commander*, he started plundering on his return journey and died at Elymais. **20:** Seleucus IV succeeded him and to help pay the Roman indemnity sent to Jerusalem an *exactor*, Heliodorus, to seize the temple treasure. He failed and died ingloriously. **21-45:** These verses concern Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the *contemptible person* who attained power by guile. **22-24:** His southern campaign, during which he deposed the *prince*, i.e. the high-priest Onias III, by *alliance* appointed Jason as high-priest, and let his troops plunder Palestine. **25-28:** His Egyptian campaign. In 169 he invaded Egypt and captured Ptolemy VI. Troubles at home forced him to leave Egypt, and on his way back with great booty, he sacked Jerusalem and plundered the treasury. **29-31:** The second campaign against Egypt, when Romans, coming in *ships* from Kittim (Cyprus), forced him to withdraw. Being

give heed to those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. ³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant; but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. ³³ And those among the people who are wise shall make many understand, though they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder, for some days. ³⁴ When they fall, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery; ³⁵ and some of those who are wise shall fall, to refine and to cleanse them^f and to make them white, until the time of the end, for it is yet for the time appointed.

³⁶ "And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is determined shall be done.

³⁷ He shall give no heed to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women; he shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. ³⁸ He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these; a god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god; those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with honor. He shall make them rulers

over many and shall divide the land for a price.

⁴⁰ "At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack^g him; but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. ⁴¹ He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train. ⁴⁴ But tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many. ⁴⁵ And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

12 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and

^f Gk: Heb among them
^g Heb thrust at

enraged he attacked Jerusalem again in 167 B.C., setting up the *abomination that makes desolate*, i.e. a heathen altar in the temple (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," §15). **33-35:** The resistance movement. Some Hellenizing Jews sided with Antiochus, forsaking the *covenant*, but the *wise*, though persecuted, maintained resistance. The *little help* is the Maccabean success, the revolt of Mattathias and his son, Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc. ch. 2). **36-39:** Antiochus' march towards his doom. He abandoned *the gods of his fathers* and the Tammuz-Adonis cult, being interested in Zeus Olympius and claiming divine honors for himself. **40-45:** Predictions that Ptolemy will provoke another war with disastrous results, so that Antiochus will conquer Libya to the west of Egypt and Ethiopia to the south, but on his way back will perish somewhere along the coastal route. None of these predictions was fulfilled. **12.1-13:** The final consummation. **1:** These campaigns of Antiochus only introduce the great tribulation which precedes the end of the age. *Michael*, see 10.12-13 n. **2:** The general resurrection, with judgment to *shame* or to

everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. ⁴ But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

⁵ Then I Daniel looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. ⁶ And I^h said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" ⁷ The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives for ever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time; and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to

an end all these things would be accomplished. ⁸ I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the issue of these things?" ⁹ He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but those who are wise shall understand. ¹¹ And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. ¹³ But go your way till the end; and you shall rest, and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

h Gk Vg: Heb he

life. **4:** Knowledge of these matters is to be *shut up* till the end. **6-7:** When will the end be? One angelic response to Daniel's question: it will be in three and a half years (see 7.25-28 n.). **8-12:** Two new and variant calculations setting the end somewhat later, i.e. 1,290 days and 1,335 days, perhaps added after the three and one-half years (1,150 days) had passed. **13:** The promise that Daniel will have a place in that final consummation.

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

The book of Hosea stands first in that part of the Latter Prophets called the Book of the Twelve, also known as the Minor Prophets because of the brevity of the books in comparison with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (see Introduction to the Old Testament, p. xxi).

Hosea's ministry to the northern kingdom followed closely upon that of Amos (see Introduction to Amos). While Amos had spoken as a southerner to a prosperous Israel enjoying an era of peace, Hosea spoke as a native to his own people who were suffering from war with Assyria and in virtual anarchy. Four Israelite kings were assassinated within fourteen years after the death of Jeroboam II. After the Assyrian conquest of 733-732, which resulted in the fall of Damascus, Samaria itself soon fell to the Assyrians (721).

Not all aspects of Hosea's life are clear. It can best be reconstructed, however, from the first three chapters by observing that Hosea deals with Gomer as the LORD deals with Israel; the prophet's personal life is an incarnation of God's redeeming love. Accordingly the sensitive prophet, obedient to his call to take "a wife of harlotry," married the prostitute Gomer. She bore three children, of whom Hosea was presumably not the father (2.4-5), and then left him. But Hosea brought her back publicly (3.1-5) and took her again to himself.

Hosea's ministry dramatizes his message. Though the book is divided into two uneven parts (chs. 1-3; 4-14) and presents serious textual difficulties, it is thoroughly unified by the dominant theme of divine compassion and the love that will not let Israel go. At the heart of Hosea's preaching is a gospel of redeeming love.

THE WORD OF THE LORD THAT came to Hose'a the son of Be-e'ri, in the days of Uzzi'ah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezeki'ah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jerobo'am the son of Jo'ash, king of Israel.

2 When the LORD first spoke through Hose'a, the LORD said to Hose'a, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry, for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the LORD." ³ So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Dib-

la'im, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵ And on that day, I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Call her name Not pitied, for I will

1.1: Superscription. The conviction that *the word of the LORD* comes to a prophet (Jl.1.1; Mic.1.1; Zeph.1.1; Hag.1.1; Zech.1.1) is fundamental to Hebrew prophecy; it asserts that the prophet's inspiration and authority are not from himself but God, who has revealed his will to him (Ezek.2.3-5; 3.10-11; Am.3.7; Zech.1.6), whose personal agent he is (Ex.4.15-16; Is.6.8), and whom alone he must obey (1 Kg. ch. 13; Am.7.14-17; Acts 4.18-20). *Hosea* means "salvation" or "deliverance." *The kings of Judah*, see Is.1.1 n., and Mic.1.1 n. Hosea prophesied not only during the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.; see Introduction to Amos), but also after his death.

1.2-3.5: Hosea's disciplinary actions against his unfaithful wife and her children and his redemptive love for them exemplify God's dealings with harlotrous Israel and form a living basis for his preaching. Time—the reign of Jeroboam II.

1.2-9: Hosea marries the prostitute Gomer and gives her children prophetically significant names (Is.7.3; 8.3) at the LORD's command. **2:** *For the land . . .* expresses the essence of Israel's sin and her need of redemption. **4-5:** *Jezreel*, meaning "God sows," points backward to the sin of the house of Jehu (1 Kg.19.15-17; 2 Kg. chs. 9-10) and forward to Israel's restoration (Hos.2.21-23). Jeroboam II belonged to the dynasty of Jehu. **6:** Because of her sin Israel will *not be pitied*, and the name of the second child (Hebrew *Lo-ruhamah*) will be a living reminder

no more have pity on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. ⁷ But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will deliver them by the LORD their God; I will not deliver them by bow, nor by sword, nor by war, nor by horses, nor by horsemen."

⁸ When she had weaned Not pitied, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹ And the LORD said, "Call his name Not my people, for you are not my people and I am not your God."^a

¹⁰^b Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Sons of the living God." ¹¹ And the people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head; and they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

²^c Say to your brother,^d "My people," and to your sister,^e "She has obtained pity."

² "Plead with your mother, plead—
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband—
that she put away her harlotry from
her face,
and her adultery from between
her breasts;

³ lest I strip her naked
and make her as in the day she
was born,
and make her like a wilderness,
and set her like a parched
land,
and slay her with thirst.

⁴ Upon her children also I will have
no pity,
because they are children of
harlotry.

⁵ For their mother has played the
harlot;
she that conceived them has
acted shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my
lovers,
who give me my bread and my
water,
my wool and my flax, my oil and
my drink.'

⁶ Therefore I will hedge up her^f way
with thorns;
and I will build a wall against her,
so that she cannot find her paths.

⁷ She shall pursue her lovers,
but not overtake them;
and she shall seek them,
but shall not find them.

Then she shall say, 'I will go
and return to my first husband,
for it was better with me then
than now.'

⁸ And she did not know
that it was I who gave her
the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and who lavished upon her silver
and gold which they used for
Ba'al.

⁹ Therefore I will take back
my grain in its time,
and my wine in its season;
and I will take away my wool and
my flax,
which were to cover her
nakedness.

^a Heb *I am not yours* ^b Ch 2.1 in Heb
^c Ch 2.3 in Heb ^d Gk: Heb *brothers*
^e Gk Vg: Heb *sisters* ^f Gk Syr: Heb *your*

of this. **7:** This verse, which exempts *Judah*, is a later addition. **8-9:** The name of the third child (Hebrew *Lo-ammi*) signifies the breaking of the covenant relationship between the LORD and Israel (Ex.6.7; compare Is.40.1; Jer.31.31-34).

1.10-2.1: Israel's punishment is not final; afterwards she *shall be like the sand of the sea* (compare Gen.22.17) and again be God's *sons* (compare Rom.9.25-26). Though these words may have been uttered at a different time, the thought is genuinely Hosean.

2.2-13: Israel will suffer public shame and personal privation like a harlot, because she has adulterated the worship of the LORD with Canaanite Baalism. **3:** Is.47.2-3; Ezek.16.37-39; Rev.17.16. **5:** Jer.2.23-25; 3.1-2. Israel's *lovers* and their gifts refer to the immoral fertility rites of Canaanite religion. **7:** Hosea takes the metaphor of marriage from the cult of Baal, and boldly calls the LORD *husband*. **8:** The LORD, the universal Creator, is the giver of all good gifts, though Israel may fail to acknowledge this (Gen.1.29-30; Dt.7.13; Jas.1.17). **9:** Am.4.6-8.

- ¹⁰ Now I will uncover her lewdness
in the sight of her lovers,
and no one shall rescue her out of
my hand.
- ¹¹ And I will put an end to all her
mirth,
her feasts, her new moons, her
sabbaths,
and all her appointed feasts.
- ¹² And I will lay waste her vines and
her fig trees,
of which she said,
‘These are my hire,
which my lovers have given me.’
I will make them a forest,
and the beasts of the field shall
devour them.
- ¹³ And I will punish her for the feast
days of the Ba’als
when she burned incense to them
and decked herself with her ring and
jewelry,
and went after her lovers,
and forgot me, says the LORD.
- ¹⁴ “Therefore, behold, I will allure
her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.
- ¹⁵ And there I will give her her
vineyards,
and make the Valley of Achor
a door of hope.
And there she shall answer as in the
days of her youth,
as at the time when she came out
of the land of Egypt.
- ¹⁶ “And in that day, says the LORD,
you will call me, ‘My husband,’ and no

longer will you call me, ‘My Ba’al.’
¹⁷ For I will remove the names of the
Ba’als from her mouth, and they shall
be mentioned by name no more.

¹⁸ And I will make for you^g a cove-
nant on that day with the beasts of
the field, the birds of the air, and the
creeping things of the ground; and I
will abolish^h the bow, the sword, and
war from the land; and I will make
you lie down in safety. ¹⁹ And I will
betroth you to me for ever; I will be-
troth you to me in righteousness and
in justice, in steadfast love, and in
mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in
faithfulness; and you shall know the
LORD.

²¹ “And in that day, says the LORD,
I will answer the heavens
and they shall answer the earth;
²² and the earth shall answer the
grain, the wine, and the oil,
and they shall answer Jezreel;ⁱ
²³ and I will sow himⁱ for myself in
the land.

And I will have pity on Not pitied,
and I will say to Not my people,
‘You are my people’;
and he shall say, ‘Thou art my
God.’”

3 And the LORD said to me, “Go
again, love a woman who is be-
loved of a paramour and is an adulter-
ess; even as the LORD loves the people
of Israel, though they turn to other
gods and love cakes of raisins.” ² So I
bought her for fifteen shekels of silver

^g Heb them ^h Heb break
ⁱ That is God sows ^j Cn: Heb her

11: Is.1.12-17; Am.5.21-24. 13: *Baals*, see v. 16 n. *Incense* was peculiarly associated with pagan worship (Jer.44.8,17). *Decked herself*, compare Is.3.16-22.

2.14-23: The LORD will woo Israel back, renew his covenant with her, and betroth her to himself forever. 14: The *wilderness* signifies Israel's early years after the Exodus when she was faithful to the covenant (Ex. chs. 19-24; Jer.2.2-3; compare Ezek.20.33-38). 15: When entering the Promised Land Israel sinned at the *Valley of Achor* (Jos.7.20-26; Is.65.10). 16: *Baal*, often used as a proper name of the leading Canaanite deity, means “master,” “lord.” 17-23: The climax of the chapter promises the removal of the *Baals*, the establishment of a universal covenant (Lev.26.6; Job 5.23; Is.11.6-9; Ezek.34.25-31), the abolition of war (Ps.46.9; Is.2.4), and betrothal to the LORD in *steadfast love and faithfulness*.

3.1-5: The restoration of Gomer. Hosea buys back his adulterous wife, disciplines her, and affirms his devotion. In a like manner the LORD will restore Israel. 1: *Even as the LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods*; these words disclose the central message of this book: divine love necessitates both Israel's temporary chastisement and her ultimate redemption. *Cakes of raisins* were used in pagan festivals (Is.16.7; Jer.7.18). 2: *Shekel*, about

and a homer and a lethech of barley.
³ And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days; you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you." ⁴ For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim. ⁵ Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

4 Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel;
 for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.
 There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land;
² there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery;
 they break all bounds and murder follows murder.
³ Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air; and even the fish of the sea are taken away.

⁴ Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest.^k

⁵ You shall stumble by day,

the prophet also shall stumble with you by night;
 and I will destroy your mother.

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
 because you have rejected knowledge,
 I reject you from being a priest to me.

And since you have forgotten the law of your God,
 I also will forget your children.

⁷ The more they increased, the more they sinned against me;
 I will change their glory into shame.

⁸ They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity.

⁹ And it shall be like people, like priest;
 I will punish them for their ways, and requite them for their deeds.

¹⁰ They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the harlot, but not multiply;
 because they have forsaken the LORD to cherish harlotry.

¹¹ Wine and new wine take away the understanding.

¹² My people inquire of a thing of wood, and their staff gives them oracles.
 For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray,

k Cn: Heb uncertain

eleven grams; *homer*, about six and one-half bushels; *lethech*, about three bushels. From whom Hosea bought her is not indicated. True redemption is costly (Ps.49.7-8; 1 Cor.6.19-20; 7.23; Gal.4.4-5); Hosea redeemed his wife by love and for a price. 4: During the period of corrective punishment Israel will be deprived of her civil and ceremonial institutions. *Pillar*, Gen.31.45. *Ephod*, see Jg.8.24-28 n.; 1 Sam.2.18 n. *Teraphim*, household gods (Gen.31.19). 5: The phrase *and David their king* is probably a later Judean addition.

4.1-14.9: Because of her constant rebellion, the judgment of the LORD is upon Israel; yet she will eventually be restored. These themes are elaborated in a series of discourses written after the death of Jeroboam II. The lack of clear order may in part reflect the style of the prophet and may in part be due to accidents in the transmission of the oracles.

4.1-8.14: All Israel has forgotten the LORD and has sought help from other gods and other nations. 4.1-3: The LORD has a controversy with his people because they love neither him nor their fellow Israelites (Mic.6.2). *Faithfulness, kindness (steadfast love), and knowledge of God* are major theological terms in Hosea (2.19-20; 4.6; 5.4,7; 6.3,6; 10.12; 11.3-4,12b; 12.6). 4-6: The controversy is first of all with the priest and prophet; for, having rejected the knowledge and teaching of God, they have destroyed his people. 7-14: Sin has infected them all, like people, like priest. 13: A reference to high-place sanctuaries and their sacred trees (Jer.2.20).

and they have left their God to
play the harlot.

- ¹³ They sacrifice on the tops of the
mountains,
and make offerings upon the hills,
under oak, poplar, and terebinth,
because their shade is good.

Therefore your daughters play the
harlot,
and your brides commit adultery.

- ¹⁴ I will not punish your daughters
when they play the harlot,
nor your brides when they commit
adultery;
for the men themselves go aside with
harlots,
and sacrifice with cult prostitutes,
and a people without understanding
shall come to ruin.

- ¹⁵ Though you play the harlot, O
Israel,
let not Judah become guilty.
Enter not into Gilgal,
nor go up to Beth-a'ven,
and swear not, "As the LORD
lives."

- ¹⁶ Like a stubborn heifer,
Israel is stubborn;
can the LORD now feed them
like a lamb in a broad pasture?

- ¹⁷ E'phraim is joined to idols,
let him alone.

- ¹⁸ A band^l of drunkards, they give
themselves to harlotry;
they love shame more than their
glory.^m

- ¹⁹ A wind has wrapped themⁿ in its
wings,
and they shall be ashamed
because of their altars.^o

5 Hear this, O priests!
Give heed, O house of Israel!

Hearken, O house of the king!

For the judgment pertains to you;
for you have been a snare at Mizpah,
and a net spread upon Tabor.

- ² And they have made deep the pit of
Shittim;^p
but I will chastise all of them.

- ³ I know E'phraim,
and Israel is not hid from me;
for now, O E'phraim, you have
played the harlot,
Israel is defiled.

- ⁴ Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
For the spirit of harlotry is within
them,
and they know not the LORD.

- ⁵ The pride of Israel testifies to his
face;
E'phraim^q shall stumble in his
guilt;
Judah also shall stumble with
them.

- ⁶ With their flocks and herds they
shall go
to seek the LORD,
but they will not find him;
he has withdrawn from them.

- ⁷ They have dealt faithlessly with the
LORD;
for they have borne alien children.
Now the new moon shall devour
them with their fields.

- ⁸ Blow the horn in Gib'e-ah,
the trumpet in Ramah.
Sound the alarm at Beth-a'ven;
tremble,^r O Benjamin!

- ⁹ E'phraim shall become a desolation
in the day of punishment;
among the tribes of Israel

^l Cn: Heb uncertain

^m Cn Compare Gk: Heb of this line uncertain

ⁿ Heb *her* ^o Gk Syr: Heb *sacrifices*

^p Cn: Heb uncertain ^q Heb *Israel and Ephraim*

^r Cn Compare Gk: Heb *after you*

14: *Cult prostitutes*, see Gen.38.15 n.; Dt.23.17 n. **15:** *Beth-aven* is Bethel (Am.5.5). **5.1-2:** Israel's leaders have been a snare, so God will chastise all of them. *Tabor*, Mount Tabor, where there seems to have been a sanctuary (compare Dt.33.19; Jg.4.6). *Mizpah*, either the city in Transjordan (Jg.10.17) or north of Jerusalem (1 Sam.7.5). **3-4:** The spirit of harlotry is so confirmed within them that they cannot return to their God. **5b:** 1.7. **6:** Contrast Jer.29.13. **7:** *Alien children*, sons faithless to the LORD. *New moon*, perhaps referring to the new moon festivals. **8-14:** In the day of punishment the LORD will become the enemy of Israel (Am.9.2-4).

- I declare what is sure.
¹⁰ The princes of Judah have become like those who remove the landmark;
 upon them I will pour out my wrath like water.
¹¹ E'phraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment,
 because he was determined to go after vanity.^s
¹² Therefore I am like a moth to E'phraim,
 and like dry rot to the house of Judah.
¹³ When E'phraim saw his sickness,
 and Judah his wound,
 then E'phraim went to Assyria,
 and sent to the great king.^t
 But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound.
¹⁴ For I will be like a lion to E'phraim,
 and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
 I, even I, will rend and go away,
 I will carry off, and none shall rescue.
¹⁵ I will return again to my place,
 until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,
 and in their distress they seek me, saying,
 6 "Come, let us return to the LORD;
 for he has torn, that he may heal us;
 he has stricken, and he will bind us up.
² After two days he will revive us;
 on the third day he will raise us up,
 that we may live before him.
³ Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD;
 his going forth is sure as the dawn;
 he will come to us as the showers,

as the spring rains that water the earth."

- ⁴ What shall I do with you, O E'phraim?
 What shall I do with you, O Judah?
 Your love is like a morning cloud,
 like the dew that goes early away.
⁵ Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,
 I have slain them by the words of my mouth,
 and my judgment goes forth as the light.^u
⁶ For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
 the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.
⁷ But at^v Adam they transgressed the covenant;
 there they dealt faithlessly with me.
⁸ Gilead is a city of evildoers,
 tracked with blood.
⁹ As robbers lie in wait^w for a man,
 so the priests are banded together;^x
 they murder on the way to Shechem,
 yea, they commit villainy.
¹⁰ In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing;
 E'phraim's harlotry is there, Israel is defiled.
¹¹ For you also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed.
 When I would restore the fortunes of my people,
 7 ¹ when I would heal Israel,
 the corruption of E'phraim is revealed,
 and the wicked deeds of Sama'ria;

^s Gk: Heb a command

^t Cn: Heb a king that will contend

^u Gk Syr: Heb thy judgment goes forth

^v Cn: Heb like ^w Cn: Heb uncertain

^x Syr: Heb a company

This section refers to the Syro-Ephraimitic War (2 Kg.15.27-30). **10:** *Remove the landmark*, Dt.19.14; Pr.22.28. **5.15-6.3:** If Israel will but return to the LORD, he will heal her sickness and revive her. **6.3:** *Spring rains*, the latter rains, Dt.11.14. **4-6:** What the LORD really desires is *steadfast love and knowledge* of him (4.1-3). **6:** This verse epitomizes much of Hosea's message (2.19-20; compare Mt.9.13; 12.7). *Love and not sacrifice*, compare Am.5.23,24; Mic.6.6-8. **7-11:** By her harlotry Ephraim has transgressed the Sinaitic covenant (Ex.24.3-8; Dt.5.1-3). **7:** *Adam*, geographical allusion uncertain; compare Jos.3.16. **7.1-7:** Because of her wicked

- for they deal falsely,
the thief breaks in,
and the bandits raid without.
- ² But they do not consider
that I remember all their evil
works.
Now their deeds encompass them,
they are before my face.
- ³ By their wickedness they make the
king glad,
and the princes by their treachery.
- ⁴ They are all adulterers;
they are like a heated oven,
whose baker ceases to stir the fire,
from the kneading of the dough
until it is leavened.
- ⁵ On the day of our king the princes
became sick with the heat of wine;
he stretched out his hand with
mockers.
- ⁶ For like an oven their hearts burn^y
with intrigue;
all night their anger smolders;
in the morning it blazes like a
flaming fire.
- ⁷ All of them are hot as an oven,
and they devour their rulers.
All their kings have fallen;
and none of them calls upon me.
- ⁸ E'phraim mixes himself with the
peoples;
E'phraim is a cake not turned.
- ⁹ Aliens devour his strength,
and he knows it not;
gray hairs are sprinkled upon him,
and he knows it not.
- ¹⁰ The pride of Israel witnesses
against him;
yet they do not return to the
LORD their God,
nor seek him, for all this.
- ¹¹ E'phraim is like a dove,
silly and without sense,
calling to Egypt, going to Assyria.

- ¹² As they go, I will spread over them
my net;
I will bring them down like birds
of the air;
I will chastise them for their
wicked deeds.^z
- ¹³ Woe to them, for they have strayed
from me!
Destruction to them, for they
have rebelled against me!
I would redeem them,
but they speak lies against me.
- ¹⁴ They do not cry to me from the
heart,
but they wail upon their beds;
for grain and wine they gash
themselves,
they rebel against me.
- ¹⁵ Although I trained and
strengthened their arms,
yet they devise evil against me.
- ¹⁶ They turn to Ba'al;^a
they are like a treacherous bow,
their princes shall fall by the sword
because of the insolence of their
tongue.
This shall be their derision in the
land of Egypt.

- 8** Set the trumpet to your lips,
for^b a vulture is over the house
of the LORD,
because they have broken my
covenant,
and transgressed my law.
- ² To me they cry,
My God, we Israel know thee.
- ³ Israel has spurned the good;
the enemy shall pursue him.
- ⁴ They made kings, but not through
me.

^y Gk Syr: Heb brought near

^z Cn: Heb according to the report to their congregation

^a Cn: Heb uncertain

^b Cn: Heb as

deeds, Samaria will also be punished. **4:** The time between the kneading of the dough and its fermentation is apparently when the oven was the hottest. **5:** *The day of our king*, perhaps at the celebration of enthronement. **8-10:** Ephraim is a half-baked cake. **11-13:** Ephraim is like a silly dove. *Calling to Egypt . . .*, seeking alliances. **14-16:** Because they turn to Baal the Israelites shall bear the consequences. *Gash themselves*, Dt.14.1; 1 Kg.18.28. **8.1:** *The trumpet warns of the approach of the enemy* (compare Jer.6.1; Neh.4.18-20; Jl.2.1). *Vulture*, an eagle, the Assyrian army (Jer.49.22). **4:** Probably an allusion to the rapid succession of kings

They set up princes, but without
my knowledge.
With their silver and gold they made
idols
for their own destruction.

⁵ I have^c spurned your calf, O
Sama'ria.
My anger burns against them.
How long will it be
till they are pure ⁶ in Israel?^d

A workman made it;
it is not God.
The calf of Sama'ria
shall be broken to pieces.^e

⁷ For they sow the wind,
and they shall reap the whirlwind.
The standing grain has no heads,
it shall yield no meal;
if it were to yield,
aliens would devour it.

⁸ Israel is swallowed up;
already they are among the
nations
as a useless vessel.

⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria,
a wild ass wandering alone;
E'phraim has hired lovers.

¹⁰ Though they hire allies among the
nations,
I will soon gather them up.
And they shall cease^f for a little
while
from anointing^g king and princes.

¹¹ Because E'phraim has multiplied
altars for sinning,
they have become to him altars
for sinning.

¹² Were I to write for him my laws
by ten thousands,
they would be regarded as a
strange thing.

¹³ They love sacrifice,^h

they sacrifice flesh and eat it;
but the LORD has no delight in
them.

Now he will remember their iniquity,
and punish their sins;
they shall return to Egypt.

¹⁴ For Israel has forgotten his Maker,
and built palaces;
and Judah has multiplied fortified
cities;
but I will send a fire upon his
cities,
and it shall devour his strongholds.

9 Rejoice not, O Israel!
Exult notⁱ like the peoples;
for you have played the harlot,
forsaking your God.
You have loved a harlot's hire
upon all threshing floors.
² Threshing floor and winevat shall
not feed them,
and the new wine shall fail them.
³ They shall not remain in the land
of the LORD;
but E'phraim shall return to
Egypt,
and they shall eat unclean food in
Assyria.

⁴ They shall not pour libations of wine
to the LORD;
and they shall not please him with
their sacrifices.
Their bread^j shall be like mourners'
bread;
all who eat of it shall be defiled;
for their bread shall be for their
hunger only;
it shall not come to the house of
the LORD.

^c Heb *He has*

^d Gk: Heb *for from Israel*

^e Or *shall go up in flames*

^f Gk: Heb *begin*

^g Gk: Heb *burden*

^h Cn: Heb *uncertain*

ⁱ Gk: Heb *to exultation*

^j Cn: Heb *to them*

after Jeroboam II (see Introduction). **5:** *Your calf*, see 1 Kg.12.28,29. *A workman made it*, compare Is.40.19,20. **7-10:** As punishment for political defection, Israel shall be without king and princes. **11-14:** As punishment for religious defection, Israel *shall return to Egypt* (compare 9.3,6). **14:** Am.1.4,7.

9.1-11.12: Israel has rejected the LORD and must undergo punishment that will bring loss of king, children, places of worship, and country. **9.1-17:** Israel is destined for prey and slaughter and to be deprived of land and cultus (2.11; 8.11-14; 11.5). **1:** *Harlot's hire*, the pay of the sacred prostitute (see Gen.38.17; Mic.1.7). **4:** *Mourners' bread*, unclean because of association with

⁵ What will you do on the day of
appointed festival,
and on the day of the feast of the
LORD?

⁶ For behold, they are going to
Assyria;^k
Egypt shall gather them,
Memphis shall bury them.
Nettles shall possess their precious
things of silver;
thorns shall be in their tents.

⁷ The days of punishment have come,
the days of recompense have
come;

Israel shall know it.
The prophet is a fool,
the man of the spirit is mad,
because of your great iniquity
and great hatred.

⁸ The prophet is the watchman of
E'phraim,
the people of my God,
yet a fowler's snare is on all his ways,
and hatred in the house of his
God.

⁹ They have deeply corrupted
themselves
as in the days of Gib'e-ah:
he will remember their iniquity,
he will punish their sins.

¹⁰ Like grapes in the wilderness,
I found Israel.
Like the first fruit on the fig tree,
in its first season,
I saw your fathers.

But they came to Ba'al-pe'or,
and consecrated themselves to
Ba'al,^l
and became detestable like the
thing they loved.

¹¹ E'phraim's glory shall fly away like
a bird—
no birth, no pregnancy, no
conception!

¹² Even if they bring up children,

I will bereave them till none is
left.

Woe to them
when I depart from them!

¹³ E'phraim's sons, as I have seen, are
destined for a prey;^m
E'phraim must lead forth his sons
to slaughter.

¹⁴ Give them, O LORD—
what wilt thou give?
Give them a miscarrying womb
and dry breasts.

¹⁵ Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal;
there I began to hate them.
Because of the wickedness of their
deeds
I will drive them out of my house.
I will love them no more;
all their princes are rebels.

¹⁶ E'phraim is stricken,
their root is dried up,
they shall bear no fruit.
Even though they bring forth,
I will slay their beloved children.

¹⁷ My God will cast them off,
because they have not hearkened
to him;
they shall be wanderers among
the nations.

10 Israel is a luxuriant vine
that yields its fruit.
The more his fruit increased
the more altars he built;
as his country improved
he improved his pillars.

² Their heart is false;
now they must bear their guilt.
The LORDⁿ will break down their
altars,
and destroy their pillars.

³ For now they will say:
"We have no king,

^k Cn: Heb from destruction ^l Heb shame
^m Cn Compare Gk: Heb uncertain ⁿ Heb he

the dead. **6:** *Memphis*, the capital of Lower Egypt. **7:** *Man of spirit*, that is, the prophet (see Mic.3.8 n.). **8:** *Watchman*, compare Ezek.33.6-8. **9:** 1 Sam. ch. **10. 10-17:** *In the wilderness* Israel covenanted herself to the LORD, but in Canaan she consecrated herself to the fertility god *Baal*; therefore the LORD will make her barren. **10:** *Baal-peor*, Num.25.1-18. **15:** *Gilgal*, 4.15. *Drive them out of my house*, as a husband his faithless wife. **10.1-2:** *In Canaan Israel increased*

- for we fear not the LORD,
and a king, what could he do for
us?"
- ⁴ They utter mere words;
with empty oaths they make
covenants;
so judgment springs up like
poisonous weeds
in the furrows of the field.
- ⁵ The inhabitants of Sama'ria tremble
for the calf^o of Beth-a'ven.
Its people shall mourn for it,
and its idolatrous priests shall
wail^p over it,
over its glory which has departed
from it.
- ⁶ Yea, the thing itself shall be carried
to Assyria,
as tribute to the great king.^q
E'phraim shall be put to shame,
and Israel shall be ashamed of his
idol.^r
- ⁷ Sama'ria's king shall perish,
like a chip on the face of the
waters.
- ⁸ The high places of Aven, the sin of
Israel,
shall be destroyed.
Thorn and thistle shall grow up
on their altars;
and they shall say to the mountains,
Cover us,
and to the hills, Fall upon us.
- ⁹ From the days of Gib'e-ah, you
have sinned, O Israel;
there they have continued.
Shall not war overtake them in
Gib'e-ah?
- ¹⁰ I will come^s against the wayward
people to chastise them;
and nations shall be gathered
against them
when they are chastised^t for their
double iniquity.
- ¹¹ E'phraim was a trained heifer
that loved to thresh,
and I spared her fair neck;
but I will put E'phraim to the yoke,
Judah must plow,
Jacob must harrow for himself.
- ¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness,
reap the fruit^u of steadfast love;
break up your fallow ground,
for it is the time to seek the LORD,
that he may come and rain
salvation upon you.
- ¹³ You have plowed iniquity,
you have reaped injustice,
you have eaten the fruit of lies
Because you have trusted in your
chariots^v
and in the multitude of your
warriors,
- ¹⁴ therefore the tumult of war shall arise
among your people,
and all your fortresses shall be
destroyed,
as Shalman destroyed Beth-ar'bel on
the day of battle;
mothers were dashed in pieces with
their children.
- ¹⁵ Thus it shall be done to you, O house
of Israel,^w
because of your great wickedness.
In the storm^x the king of Israel
shall be utterly cut off.
- || When Israel was a child, I loved
him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
- ² The more I^y called them,
the more they went from me;^z
they kept sacrificing to the Ba'als,
and burning incense to idols.

^o Gk Syr: Heb calves ^p Cn: Heb exult
^q Cn: Heb a king that will contend
^r Cn: Heb counsel
^s Cn Compare Gk: Heb in my desire
^t Gk: Heb bound ^u Gk: Heb according to
^v Gk: Heb way ^w Gk: Heb O Bethel
^x Cn: Heb dawn ^y Gk: Heb they
^z Gk: Heb them

in sin as she increased in prosperity. *Pillars*, Ex.23.24. **3-10:** Israel's king shall perish, for she sinned by establishing the monarchy in the days of Saul. **5:** Calf, 8.5. **8:** Am.9.1; Lk.23.30; Rev.6.16. Aven means "wickedness," a reference to Bethel. **9:** Gibeah, see Jg. ch. 19. **11-12:** Now it is the time to repent, that the LORD may rain salvation upon his people (6.3; Is.44.3; 45.8; 55.10; Jer.4.3; 2 Cor.9.10). **13-15:** Rebellious Israel shall hear the tumult of war. **14:** Shalman . . . Beth-arbel, the allusion is unknown and the text uncertain. **11.1-7:** The LORD, as a loving and patient father, must now chastise his disobedient and wilful son. **1:** Ex.4.22;

- ³ Yet it was I who taught E'phraim to walk,
I took them up in my^a arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.
- ⁴ I led them with cords of compassion,^b
with the bands of love,
and I became to them as one
who eases the yoke on their jaws,
and I bent down to them and fed them.
- ⁵ They shall return to the land of Egypt,
and Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.
- ⁶ The sword shall rage against their cities,
consume the bars of their gates,
and devour them in their fortresses.^c
- ⁷ My people are bent on turning away from me;^d
so they are appointed to the yoke,
and none shall remove it.
- ⁸ How can I give you up, O E'phraim!
How can I hand you over, O Israel!
How can I make you like Admah!
How can I treat you like Zeboi'im!
My heart recoils within me,
my compassion grows warm and tender.
- ⁹ I will not execute my fierce anger,
I will not again destroy E'phraim;
for I am God and not man,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come to destroy.^e
- ¹⁰ They shall go after the LORD,
he will roar like a lion;
- yea, he will roar,
and his sons shall come trembling from the west;
- ¹¹ they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,
and like doves from the land of Assyria;
and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.
- ^{12f} E'phraim has encompassed me with lies,
and the house of Israel with deceit;
but Judah is still known by^g God,
and is faithful to the Holy One.
- 12** E'phraim herds the wind,
and pursues the east wind all day long;
they multiply falsehood and violence;
they make a bargain with Assyria,
and oil is carried to Egypt.
- ² The LORD has an indictment against Judah,
and will punish Jacob according to his ways,
and requite him according to his deeds.
- ³ In the womb he took his brother by the heel,
and in his manhood he strove with God.
- ⁴ He strove with the angel and prevailed,
he wept and sought his favor.
He met God at Bethel,
and there God spoke with him^h—
- ⁵ the LORD the God of hosts,

^a Gk Syr Vg: Heb his ^b Heb man

^c Cn: Heb counsels

^d The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^e Cn: Heb into the city ^f Ch 12.1 in Heb

^g Cn Compare Gk: Heb roams with

^h Gk Syr: Heb us

Mt.2.15. 3: Jer.31.1–3. 8–9: The LORD's compassion restrains his anger, for he *will not come to destroy* (Mk.2.17). *Admah, Zeboiim*, cities destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. ch. 19; Dt.29.23). 10: Contrast 5.14. 11: *Doves*, contrast 7.11. *Egypt and Assyria*, contrast 9.3. 12: *But Judah is still* . . . , some regard the last part of this verse as a Judean gloss (compare 1.7).

12.1–14.9: *Rebellion and restoration*. Although the LORD led Israel by the prophets, she turned to Baal and died. Yet the LORD is the savior, and if Israel will acknowledge him, he will restore her to abundant life, because he loves her. 12.2–6: Israel should hold fast to God's love and justice, as Jacob strove with the angel at the Jabbok River. 3: *Took his brother by the heel*, Gen.25.26. 4: *Strove with the angel*, Gen.32.22–30. *Met God at Bethel*, Gen.28.11–17;

- the LORD is his name:
⁶ "So you, by the help of your God,
 return,
 hold fast to love and justice,
 and wait continually for your
 God."
⁷ A trader, in whose hands are false
 balances,
 he loves to oppress.
⁸ E'phraim has said, "Ah, but I am
 rich,
 I have gained wealth for myself";
 but all his riches can never offsetⁱ
 the guilt he has incurred.
⁹ I am the LORD your God
 from the land of Egypt;
 I will again make you dwell in
 tents,
 as in the days of the appointed
 feast.
¹⁰ I spoke to the prophets;
 it was I who multiplied visions,
 and through the prophets gave
 parables.
¹¹ If there is iniquity in Gilead
 they shall surely come to nought;
 if in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls,
 their altars also shall be like stone
 heaps
 on the furrows of the field.
¹² (Jacob fled to the land of Aram,
 there Israel did service for a wife,
 and for a wife he herded sheep.)
¹³ By a prophet the LORD brought
 Israel up from Egypt,
 and by a prophet he was
 preserved.
¹⁴ E'phraim has given bitter
 provocation;
 so his LORD will leave his
 bloodguilt upon him,
 and will turn back upon him his
 reproaches.

- 13** When E'phraim spoke, men
 trembled;
 he was exalted in Israel;
 but he incurred guilt through Ba'al
 and died.
² And now they sin more and more,
 and make for themselves molten
 images,
 idols skilfully made of their silver,
 all of them the work of craftsmen.
 Sacrifice to these, they say.^j
 Men kiss calves!
³ Therefore they shall be like the
 morning mist
 or like the dew that goes early
 away,
 like the chaff that swirls from the
 threshing floor
 or like smoke from a window.
⁴ I am the LORD your God
 from the land of Egypt;
 you know no God but me,
 and besides me there is no savior.
⁵ It was I who knew you in the
 wilderness,
 in the land of drought;
⁶ but when they had fed^k to the full,
 they were filled, and their heart
 was lifted up;
 therefore they forgot me.
⁷ So I will be to them like a lion,
 like a leopard I will lurk beside
 the way.
⁸ I will fall upon them like a bear
 robbed of her cubs,
 I will tear open their breast,
 and there I will devour them like a
 lion,
 as a wild beast would rend them.
⁹ I will destroy you, O Israel;
 who^l can help you?

ⁱ Cn Compare Gk: Heb obscure
^j Gk: Heb to these they say sacrifices of
^k Cn: Heb according to their pasture
^l Gk Syr: Heb for in me

35.5-8. **9:** As a punishment, the LORD will again make Israel *dwell in tents*, as in the wilderness during the Exodus. **10-14:** Because Israel spurned the prophets, she will be held responsible for her bitter *provocation* (Am.3.2; compare Gal.6.7). **12:** Perhaps by a Judean editor. **13.1-3:** Through the sin of Canaanite idolatry, Israel died (2.13; compare Rom.6.23; 8.13). **2:** *Men kiss calves*, at Dan and Bethel. *Morning mist*, compare 6.4. **4-13:** Because they forgot their savior, the LORD will rend and destroy the Israelites, and neither king nor princes will save them. **4:** Ex.20.2; Is.45.21. **14-16:** The LORD will not redeem his rebellious people from Death;

- ¹⁰ Where^m now is your king, to save you;
where are allⁿ your princes,^o to defend you?^p—
those of whom you said,
“Give me a king and princes?”
¹¹ I have given you kings in my anger,
and I have taken them away in my wrath.
¹² The iniquity of E’phraim is bound up,
his sin is kept in store.
¹³ The pangs of childbirth come for him,
but he is an unwise son;
for now he does not present himself
at the mouth of the womb.
¹⁴ Shall I ransom them from the power
of Sheol?
Shall I redeem them from Death?
O Death, where^q are your plagues?
O Sheol, where^q is your
destruction?
Compassion is hid from my eyes.
¹⁵ Though he may flourish as the reed
plant,^r
the east wind, the wind of the
LORD, shall come,
rising from the wilderness;
and his fountain shall dry up,
his spring shall be parched;
it shall strip his treasury
of every precious thing.
¹⁶ Sama’ria shall bear her guilt,
because she has rebelled against
her God;
they shall fall by the sword,
their little ones shall be dashed in
pieces,
and their pregnant women ripped open.

- ² Take with you words
and return to the LORD;
say to him,
“Take away all iniquity;
accept that which is good
and we will render
the fruit^t of our lips.
³ Assyria shall not save us,
we will not ride upon horses;
and we will say no more, ‘Our God,’
to the work of our hands.
In thee the orphan finds mercy.”
⁴ I will heal their faithlessness;
I will love them freely,
for my anger has turned from
them.
⁵ I will be as the dew to Israel;
he shall blossom as the lily,
he shall strike root as the poplar;^u
⁶ his shoots shall spread out;
his beauty shall be like the olive,
and his fragrance like Lebanon.
⁷ They shall return and dwell beneath
my^v shadow,
they shall flourish as a garden;^w
they shall blossom as the vine,
their fragrance shall be like the
wine of Lebanon.
⁸ O E’phraim, what have I to do with
idols?
It is I who answer and look after
you.^x
I am like an evergreen cypress,
from me comes your fruit.
⁹ Whoever is wise, let him understand
these things;
whoever is discerning, let him
know them;
for the ways of the LORD are right,
and the upright walk in them,
but transgressors stumble in them.

m Gk Syr Vg: Heb I will be
n Cn: Heb in all *o* Cn: Heb cities
p Cn Compare Gk: Heb and your judges
q Gk Syr: Heb I will be *r* Cn: Heb among brothers
s Ch 14.1 in Heb *t* Gk Syr: Heb bulls
u Cn: Heb Lebanon *v* Heb his
w Cn: Heb they shall grow grain *x* Heb him

14 Return, O Israel, to the LORD
your God,
for you have stumbled because
of your iniquity.

Samaria shall bear her guilt. 14: Quoted in 1 Cor.15.55. 14.1-3: Israel may still return to the LORD her God, for with him there is mercy (Ps.130.7-8; Is.55.6-9). 3: The futility of foreign alliances and idols. 4-7: And because he loves freely, he will heal and bring Israel back to fruitful life (Is.54.5-8). 8: The LORD alone guides and sustains Israel (2.8). 9: A later post-script, in the style of wisdom literature (compare Pr.4.11-12).

THE BOOK OF JOEL

Of Joel himself nothing is known except that he was the son of Pethuel (1.1). Like Obadiah, even his name ("the LORD is God") is not unique, for he shares it with a dozen other Old Testament figures. From his book it appears that he lived in Judah during the Persian period of Jewish history (539–331 B.C.). He was not only well acquainted with the temple at Jerusalem, but was so much interested in its priesthood and services that, like Haggai and Zechariah, he is to be considered a "cultic prophet," that is, a prophet who could exercise his ministry within the life of the temple, even using liturgical forms, and whose message may have been transmitted through priestly circles. As such, Joel helps to mark a notable change in Old Testament prophecy. Taking the characteristic forms of classical prophecy, he expands their apocalyptic and liturgical dimensions.

The dates of Joel's ministry cannot be determined with precision. The majority of historical references in his book, the absence of any mention of the Assyrians or Babylonians, and the heavy borrowing from earlier prophets point to the period from about 400 to 350 B.C.

Joel viewed a locust plague which ravished the country as God's judgment on his people and called them to repentance (1.2–2.27). Using this catastrophe as a dire warning, he went on to depict the advent of the Day of the LORD and its final judgments and blessings (2.28–3.21).

THE WORD OF THE LORD THAT
came to Joel, the son of Pethu'el:

² Hear this, you aged men,
give ear, all inhabitants of the
land!

Has such a thing happened in your
days,
or in the days of your fathers?

³ Tell your children of it,
and let your children tell their
children,
and their children another
generation.

⁴ What the cutting locust left,
the swarming locust has eaten.
What the swarming locust left,
the hopping locust has eaten,
and what the hopping locust left,
the destroying locust has eaten.

⁵ Awake, you drunkards, and weep;
and wail, all you drinkers of wine,
because of the sweet wine,
for it is cut off from your mouth.

⁶ For a nation has come up against
my land,

powerful and without number;
its teeth are lions' teeth,
and it has the fangs of a lioness.
⁷ It has laid waste my vines,
and splintered my fig trees;
it has stripped off their bark and
thrown it down;
their branches are made white.

⁸ Lament like a virgin girded with
sackcloth
for the bridegroom of her youth.

⁹ The cereal offering and the drink
offering are cut off
from the house of the LORD.

The priests mourn,
the ministers of the LORD.

¹⁰ The fields are laid waste,
the ground mourns;
because the grain is destroyed,
the wine fails,
the oil languishes.

¹¹ Be confounded, O tillers of the soil,
wail, O vinedressers,
for the wheat and the barley;
because the harvest of the field
has perished.

1.1–2.27: The locust plague. 1.1: Superscription. The word of the LORD . . . , see Hos.1.1 n. Pethuel does not occur elsewhere. 2–7: The land is devastated by a swarm of locusts, described as a nation with lions' teeth (v. 6; compare 2.4–9; Rev.9.7–8). 8–14: The whole community is

- ¹² The vine withers,
the fig tree languishes.
Pomegranate, palm, and apple,
all the trees of the field are
withered;
and gladness fails
from the sons of men.
- ¹³ Gird on sackcloth and lament, O
priests,
wail, O ministers of the altar.
Go in, pass the night in sackcloth,
O ministers of my God!
Because cereal offering and drink
offering
are withheld from the house of
your God.
- ¹⁴ Sanctify a fast,
call a solemn assembly.
Gather the elders
and all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of the LORD your God;
and cry to the LORD.
- ¹⁵ Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD is near,
and as destruction from the
Almighty it comes.
- ¹⁶ Is not the food cut off
before our eyes,
joy and gladness
from the house of our God?
- ¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods,^a
the storehouses are desolate;
the granaries are ruined
because the grain has failed.
- ¹⁸ How the beasts groan!
The herds of cattle are perplexed
because there is no pasture for them;
even the flocks of sheep are
dismayed.
- ¹⁹ Unto thee, O LORD, I cry.
For fire has devoured

- the pastures of the wilderness,
and flame has burned
all the trees of the field.
- ²⁰ Even the wild beasts cry to thee
because the water brooks are
dried up,
and fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness
- 2** Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy
mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land
tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming,
it is near,
² a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick
darkness!
Like blackness there is spread upon
the mountains
a great and powerful people;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
through the years of all
generations.
- ³ Fire devours before them,
and behind them a flame burns.
The land is like the garden of Eden
before them,
but after them a desolate
wilderness,
and nothing escapes them.
- ⁴ Their appearance is like the
appearance of horses,
and like war horses they run.
- ⁵ As with the rumbling of chariots,
they leap on the tops of the
mountains,
like the crackling of a flame of fire
devouring the stubble,
like a powerful army
drawn up for battle.

^a Heb uncertain

called upon to lament and return to the LORD. **13-14:** *Ministers of the altar* of burnt offering, who serve in the inner court (see Ezek.43.18-27). *A fast*, 2 Kg.18.6; Jer.36.6; Jon.3.5. **15-20:** The lament. **15:** This calamitous day portends the final day of the LORD which comes as destruction from the Almighty (Zeph.1.14-18). **19-20:** *Fire and flame* epitomize the most severe destruction. **2.1-11:** The cry of alarm at the approaching catastrophe. **1:** The priests blow the ram's horn (shofar) to warn of the imminent danger (Hos.5.8; Am.3.6; Zeph.1.16; Rev.8.6-13). **4-9:** The locusts, which symbolize that dreadful day, approach with the relentless and devas-

- ⁶ Before them peoples are in anguish,
all faces grow pale.
- ⁷ Like warriors they charge,
like soldiers they scale the wall.
They march each on his way,
they do not swerve^b from their
paths.
- ⁸ They do not jostle one another,
each marches in his path;
they burst through the weapons
and are not halted.
- ⁹ They leap upon the city,
they run upon the walls;
they climb up into the houses,
they enter through the windows
like a thief.
- ¹⁰ The earth quakes before them,
the heavens tremble.
The sun and the moon are darkened,
and the stars withdraw their
shining.
- ¹¹ The LORD utters his voice
before his army,
for his host is exceedingly great;
he that executes his word is
powerful.
For the day of the LORD is great and
very terrible;
who can endure it?
- ¹² "Yet even now," says the LORD,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with
mourning;
- ¹³ and rend your hearts and not
your garments."
Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in
steadfast love,
and repents of evil.
- ¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn
and repent,
- and leave a blessing behind him,
a cereal offering and a drink offering
for the LORD, your God?
- ¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
- ¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the elders;
gather the children,
even nursing infants.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her chamber.
- ¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of
the LORD, weep
and say, "Spare thy people, O LORD,
and make not thy heritage a
reproach,
a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the
peoples,
"Where is their God?" "
- ¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for
his land,
and had pity on his people.
- ¹⁹ The LORD answered and said to his
people,
"Behold, I am sending to you
grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no more make you
a reproach among the nations.
- ²⁰ "I will remove the northerner far
from you,
and drive him into a parched and
desolate land,
his front into the eastern sea,

^b Gk Syr Vg: Heb *take a pledge*

tating force of a powerful *army* (2.25; Rev.9.7–10). **6:** Nah.2.10. **10:** At the time of the divine visitation the sun, moon, and stars refuse to shine (Am.8.9). **11:** Rev.6.17. **12–17:** A call to repentance, by which total calamity may yet be averted. **13:** The pleas to *rend your hearts* and *return to the LORD* express the preaching of the classical prophets, placed here in a cultic context. *Gracious and merciful* . . . is a frequent designation of the LORD (Ex.34.6; Neh.9.17,31; Ps.86.15). **14:** Characteristically Joel regards temple offerings as a *blessing*. **15:** 1.14. **17:** *Between the vestibule* (1 Kg.6.3) and the *altar* of burnt offering (2 Chr.4.1); this was in the inner court of the priests. **18–27:** God's gracious answer promises the remission of the plague (vv. 20,25), the return of fertility (vv. 19,21–24), and the restoration of the covenant (vv. 26–27). **18:** *Jealous* includes the meaning *zealous* (Dt.4.24). **20:** *The northerner* refers to

and his rear into the western sea;
the stench and foul smell of him will
rise,
for he has done great things.

²¹ "Fear not, O land;
be glad and rejoice,
for the LORD has done great things!

²² Fear not, you beasts of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness
are green;
the tree bears its fruit,
the fig tree and vine give their full
yield.

²³ "Be glad, O sons of Zion,
and rejoice in the LORD, your
God;
for he has given the early rain for
your vindication,
he has poured down for you
abundant rain,
the early and the latter rain, as
before.

²⁴ "The threshing floors shall be full
of grain,
the vats shall overflow with wine
and oil.

²⁵ I will restore to you the years
which the swarming locust has
eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the
cutter,
my great army, which I sent
among you.

²⁶ "You shall eat in plenty and be
satisfied,
and praise the name of the LORD
your God,
who has dealt wondrously with
you.

And my people shall never again be
put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the
midst of Israel,
and that I, the LORD, am your
God and there is none else.
And my people shall never again
be put to shame.

^{28c} "And it shall come to pass
afterward,
that I will pour out my spirit on all
flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall
prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see
visions.

²⁹ Even upon the menservants and
maidservants
in those days, I will pour out my
spirit.

³⁰ "And I will give portents in the
heavens and on the earth, blood and
fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun
shall be turned to darkness, and the
moon to blood, before the great and
terrible day of the LORD comes. ³² And
it shall come to pass that all who call
upon the name of the LORD shall be
delivered; for in Mount Zion and in
Jerusalem there shall be those who
escape, as the LORD has said, and
among the survivors shall be those
whom the LORD calls.

^{3d} "For behold, in those days and
at that time, when I restore the
fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ² I
will gather all the nations and bring
them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment

c Ch 3.1 in Heb d Ch 4.1 in Heb

the destructive agent, probably the locusts. **27:** By his gifts of abundance the LORD's people will know that he alone is their God (Is.45.5,6,18; Ezek.36.11; 39.28) and dwells in their midst (3.17,21).

2.28-3.21: The day of the LORD. **2.28-32:** The outpouring of the spirit and the signs foretelling the great day. **28-29:** For Joel *all flesh* meant primarily the Jews (3.2,17,19-21; Ezek. 39.29); for Peter at Pentecost it included all nations (Acts 2.17). **30-31:** *The heavens and the earth* will warn of the great and terrible day (Mk.13.24; Rev.6.12). **31:** Here *blood* indicates color. **32:** Those who worship the LORD (Gen.4.26; 12.8; Ps.116.13) will be delivered (Acts 2.21; Rom.10.13). **32b:** Ob.17. **3.1-3:** The day of judgment on all the nations. The trial will be held in the valley of Jehoshaphat ("the LORD judges"), called the valley of decision in v. 14

with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations, and have divided up my land,³ and have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and have sold a girl for wine, and have drunk it.

4 "What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will requite your deed upon your own head swiftly and speedily.⁵ For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples."⁶ You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, removing them far from their own border.⁷ But now I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will requite your deed upon your own head.⁸ I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabe'ans, to a nation far off; for the LORD has spoken."

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations:

Prepare war,
stir up the mighty men.

Let all the men of war draw near,
let them come up.

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords,
and your pruning hooks into
spears;
let the weak say, "I am a warrior."

¹¹ Hasten and come,
all you nations round about,
gather yourselves there.

Bring down thy warriors, O LORD.

¹² Let the nations bestir themselves,
and come up to the valley of
Jehosh'aphat;
for there I will sit to judge
all the nations round about.

¹³ Put in the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Go in, tread,
for the wine press is full.
The vats overflow,
for their wickedness is great.

¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes,
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near
in the valley of decision.

¹⁵ The sun and the moon are darkened,
and the stars withdraw their
shining.

¹⁶ And the LORD roars from Zion,
and utters his voice from
Jerusalem,
and the heavens and the earth
shake.

But the LORD is a refuge to his
people,
a stronghold to the people of
Israel.

¹⁷ "So you shall know that I am the
LORD your God,
who dwell in Zion, my holy
mountain.

And Jerusalem shall be holy
and strangers shall never again
pass through it.

e Or palaces

(Jer.25.31). Joel probably had no exact spot in mind, although the context (2.32; 3.1,16,17,21) points to the general area of Jerusalem, and tradition locates it in the Kidron valley. **3a:** Ob.11. **4-8:** Tyre (Is. ch. 23; Ezek.26.1-28.19; Am.1.9-10; Zech.9.3-4), Sidon (Ezek.28.20-26; Zech.9.2), and Philistia (Is.14.29-31; Jer. ch. 47; Ezek.25.15-17; Am.1.6-8; Zeph.2.4-7; Zech. 9.5-7) will receive their recompense first (this prose paragraph may be a later addition). **6-8:** Because the Philistines and Phoenicians sold Israelites as slaves to Gentiles (Ezek.27.13; Am. 1.6,9), their children will be sold to the *Sabeans*, famous traders from southwest Arabia. **9-12:** The holy war between the LORD's warriors and all the nations round about (compare Ezek. chs. 38-39). **10:** The picture in Is.2.4 and Mic.4.3 is reversed. **13-17:** *The day of the LORD is near.* **13:** The inordinate wickedness of the Gentiles is compared to the harvest which is ripe and vats which overflow (Is.63.1-6; Mt.3.10-12; Mk.4.29; Rev.14.15-20). **16:** Am.1.2. **17:** Jerusalem shall now be holy, as the LORD's earthly tabernacle (Is.1.24-28; 52.1; Zech.8.3;

¹⁸ “And in that day
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and the hills shall flow with milk,
and all the stream beds of Judah
shall flow with water;
and a fountain shall come forth from
the house of the LORD
and water the valley of Shittim.

¹⁹ “Egypt shall become a desolation
and Edom a desolate wilderness,

for the violence done to the people
of Judah,
because they have shed innocent
blood in their land.

²⁰ But Judah shall be inhabited for
ever,
and Jerusalem to all generations.

²¹ I will avenge their blood, and I will
not clear the guilty,^g
for the LORD dwells in Zion.”

^g Gk Syr: Heb *I will hold innocent their blood which I
have not held innocent*

14.21; Rev.21.2-3,27). **18-21:** *The divine blessings bestowed in that day* include the paradisiacal fertility of the land, the destruction of Israel's ancient enemies, and the restoration of Judah. **18:** Ezek.47.1-12; Am.9.13. **19:** Ob.10.

THE BOOK OF AMOS

During the long and peaceful reign of Jeroboam II (786–746 B.C.) Israel attained a height of territorial expansion and national prosperity never again reached. The military security and economic affluence which characterized this age were taken by many Israelites as signs of the LORD's special favor toward them which they felt they deserved because of their extravagant support of the official shrines.

Into this scene stepped the prophet Amos, probably sometime during the decade 760–750 B.C. A native of the small Judean village of Tekoa, he was called by God from a shepherd's task (7.14–15) to the difficult mission of preaching harsh words in a smooth season. He denounced Israel, as well as her neighbors, for reliance upon military might, and for grave injustice in social dealings, abhorrent immorality, and shallow, meaningless piety. Amos' forceful, uncompromising preaching brought him into conflict with the religious authorities of his day. His personal confrontation of the priest Amaziah (7.10–17) remains one of the unforgettable scenes in Hebrew prophecy.

Expelled from the royal sanctuary at Bethel and commanded not to prophesy there again, Amos probably returned to Judah and wrote down the essence of his public preaching in substantially its present form. The book falls into three parts, chs. 1–2, oracles against Israel's neighbors; chs. 3–6, indictment of Israel herself for sin and injustice; and chs. 7–9, visions of Israel's coming doom. Amos became the first in a brilliant succession of writing prophets whose words have left their indelible stamp on later thought about God and man.

THE WORDS OF AMOS, WHO WAS among the shepherds of Teko'a, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzzi'ah king of Judah and in the days of Jerobo'am the son of Jo'ash, king of Israel, two years^a before the earthquake.² And he said:

“The LORD roars from Zion,
and utters his voice from
Jerusalem;
the pastures of the shepherds mourn,
and the top of Carmel withers.”

³ Thus says the LORD:

“For three transgressions of
Damascus,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^b

because they have threshed Gilead
with threshing sledges of iron.

⁴ So I will send a fire upon the house
of Haz'ael,
and it shall devour the strongholds
of Ben-ha'dad.

⁵ I will break the bar of Damascus,
and cut off the inhabitants from
the Valley of Aven,^c
and him that holds the scepter from
Beth-eden;
and the people of Syria shall go
into exile to Kir,”

says the LORD.

⁶ Thus says the LORD:

^a Or during two years ^c Or On
^b Heb cause it to return

1.1: Superscription. *He saw*, see Nah.1.1 n. *Uzziah* reigned over the southern kingdom from 783 to 742 B.C. The *earthquake*, mentioned again in Zech.14.5, cannot be precisely dated.

1.2–2.16: Indictment of neighboring peoples, Israel, and Judah. Amos applies the same standards to Israel's neighbors and to Israel. 2: This verse occurs in similar form in Jl.3.16 (compare Jer.25.30). Some scholars consider it an editorial addition. It sounds the solemn theme of the whole section. 3,6,9, etc.: *Thus says the LORD* and the conclusion *says the LORD* (Hebrew, “the oracle of Yahweh”) are standard formulas identifying prophetic oracles. The expression *for three transgressions . . . and for four* indicates “more than enough” (Job 33.14; Pr.30.18). Here *transgression* means rebellion. 3–5: Against Damascus (compare Is.17.1–3; Jer.49.23–27; Zech. 9.1–4). *Damascus* was the capital of *Syria*; *Hazael* and *Ben-hadad* III were rulers (2 Kg.13.3); and *Kir* is called the place of Syrian origins (Am.9.7) and exile (2 Kg.16.9). *The Valley of Aven*, perhaps to be read “the Valley of On,” may be between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. *Beth-eden* is the Bit-idini of the Assyrian records, by the Euphrates. The Syrian conquest of

"For three transgressions of Gaza,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^b
because they carried into exile a
whole people
to deliver them up to Edom.
⁷ So I will send a fire upon the wall
of Gaza,
and it shall devour her
strongholds.
⁸ I will cut off the inhabitants from
Ashdod,
and him that holds the scepter
from Ash'kelon;
I will turn my hand against Ekron;
and the remnant of the Philistines
shall perish,"
says the Lord GOD.

⁹ Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Tyre,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^b
because they delivered up a whole
people to Edom,
and did not remember the
covenant of brotherhood.
¹⁰ So I will send a fire upon the wall of
Tyre,
and it shall devour her
strongholds."

¹¹ Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Edom,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^b
because he pursued his brother with
the sword,
and cast off all pity,
and his anger tore perpetually,
and he kept his wrath^d for ever.
¹² So I will send a fire upon Teman,
and it shall devour the strongholds
of Bozrah."

¹³ Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of the
Ammonites,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^b
because they have ripped up women
with child in Gilead,
that they might enlarge their
border.
¹⁴ So I will kindle a fire in the wall of
Rabbah,
and it shall devour her
strongholds,
with shouting in the day of battle,
with a tempest in the day of the
whirlwind;
¹⁵ and their king shall go into exile,
he and his princes together,"
says the LORD.

2 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Moab,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^e
because he burned to lime
the bones of the king of Edom.
² So I will send a fire upon Moab,
and it shall devour the
strongholds of Ker'ioth,
and Moab shall die amid uproar,
amid shouting and the sound of
the trumpet;
³ I will cut off the ruler from its midst,
and will slay all its princes with
him,"
says the LORD.

⁴ Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Judah,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^e

^b Heb *cause it to return*
^d Gk Syr Vg: Heb *his wrath kept*
^e Heb *cause it to return*

Gilead is referred to in 2 Kg.10.32-33. **6-8:** Against Philistia. Four Philistine cities are condemned because of their slave traffic with Edom (2 Chr.21.16-17; Jl.3.4-8). **9-10:** Against Tyre (see Jl.3.4-8). *Covenant of brotherhood*, compare 1 Kg.9.13. **11-12:** Against Edom. This oracle, recalling later oracles against Edom (see Introduction to Obadiah), is regarded by many as secondary. *Brother*, that is, Judah, Mal.1.2. **13-15:** Against the Ammonites (Zeph. 2.8-11), who are to be punished because of inhuman atrocities against Israelites in Transjordan in *Gilead*. **2.1-3:** Against Moab, Israel's ancient enemy to the south-east of the Jordan (Zeph.2.8-11). *Burned to lime*, perhaps involving a desecration (compare 2 Kg.23.16); it may have been thought that cremation after death had an adverse effect on the spirit. **4-5:** Against Judah. Because of its Deuteronomic flavor this oracle is widely held to be a later addition.

because they have rejected the law
of the LORD,
and have not kept his statutes,
but their lies have led them astray,
after which their fathers walked.
⁵ So I will send a fire upon Judah,
and it shall devour the strongholds
of Jerusalem."

⁶ Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Israel,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;^e
because they sell the righteous for
silver,
and the needy for a pair of shoes—
⁷ they that trample the head of the
poor into the dust of the earth,
and turn aside the way of the
afflicted;
a man and his father go in to the
same maiden,
so that my holy name is profaned;
⁸ they lay themselves down beside
every altar
upon garments taken in pledge;
and in the house of their God they
drink
the wine of those who have been
fined.

⁹ "Yet I destroyed the Amorite before
them,
whose height was like the height
of the cedars,
and who was as strong as the oaks;
I destroyed his fruit above,
and his roots beneath.
¹⁰ Also I brought you up out of the
land of Egypt,
and led you forty years in the
wilderness,
to possess the land of the Amorite.
¹¹ And I raised up some of your sons
for prophets,

and some of your young men for
Nazirites.
Is it not indeed so, O people of
Israel?"
says the LORD.

¹² "But you made the Nazirites drink
wine,
and commanded the prophets,
saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'
¹³ "Behold, I will press you down in
your place,
as a cart full of sheaves presses
down.
¹⁴ Flight shall perish from the swift,
and the strong shall not retain his
strength,
nor shall the mighty save his life;
¹⁵ he who handles the bow shall not
stand,
and he who is swift of foot shall
not save himself,
nor shall he who rides the horse
save his life;
¹⁶ and he who is stout of heart among
the mighty
shall flee away naked in that day,"
says the LORD.

3 Hear this word that the LORD has
spoken against you, O people of
Israel, against the whole family which
I brought up out of the land of Egypt:
² "You only have I known
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your iniquities.

³ "Do two walk together,
unless they have made an
appointment?
⁴ Does a lion roar in the forest,
when he has no prey?
Does a young lion cry out from his
den,

^e Heb *cause it to return*

6-16: Against Israel. The judgment, cast into the same literary form as that used for Israel's neighbors, is portrayed in more detail because Israel had been given specific knowledge of God's requirements.

3.1-6.14: Israel's sinfulness and God's punishment. Three sections, each with the same opening exhortation (3.1; 4.1; 5.1).

3.1-15. The privileges of election create a greater responsibility (Lk.12.48). Because Israel had been favored above *all the families of the earth* (Ex.19.4-6; Dt.7.6), the neighboring nations

if he has taken nothing?
 5 Does a bird fall in a snare on the earth,
 when there is no trap for it?
 Does a snare spring up from the ground,
 when it has taken nothing?
 6 Is a trumpet blown in a city,
 and the people are not afraid?
 Does evil befall a city,
 unless the LORD has done it?
 7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,
 without revealing his secret
 to his servants the prophets.
 8 The lion has roared;
 who will not fear?
 The Lord GOD has spoken;
 who can but prophesy?"

9 Proclaim to the strongholds in
 Assyria,^f
 and to the strongholds in the land
 of Egypt,
 and say, "Assemble yourselves upon
 the mountains of Sama'ria,
 and see the great tumults within
 her,
 and the oppressions in her midst."
 10 "They do not know how to do
 right," says the LORD,
 "those who store up violence and
 robbery in their strongholds."
 11 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
 "An adversary shall surround the
 land,
 and bring down your defenses
 from you,
 and your strongholds shall be
 plundered."

12 Thus says the LORD: "As the
 shepherd rescues from the mouth of
 the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear,

so shall the people of Israel who dwell
 in Sama'ria be rescued, with the cor-
 ner of a couch and part^g of a bed."

13 "Hear, and testify against the house
 of Jacob,"
 says the Lord GOD, the God of
 hosts,
 14 "that on the day I punish Israel for
 his transgressions,
 I will punish the altars of Bethel,
 and the horns of the altar shall be
 cut off
 and fall to the ground.
 15 I will smite the winter house with
 the summer house;
 and the houses of ivory shall
 perish,
 and the great houses^h shall come to
 an end,"
 says the LORD.

4 "Hear this word, you cows of
 Bashan,
 who are in the mountain of
 Sama'ria,
 who oppress the poor, who crush the
 needy,
 who say to their husbands, 'Bring,
 that we may drink!'
 2 The Lord GOD has sworn by his
 holiness
 that, behold, the days are coming
 upon you,
 when they shall take you away with
 hooks,
 even the last of you with fishhooks.
 3 And you shall go out through the
 breaches,
 every one straight before her;

^f Gk: Heb *Ashdod*

^g The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^h Or many houses

are assembled to witness her chastisement. 3-8: The call to prophesy cannot be resisted. 6: Israel's God is operative in history, sending calamity (*evil*) as corrective discipline (Job 2.10; Is.45.7). 7: The Old Testament concept of revelation is grounded in the conviction that the God who is Lord over nature and history discloses his will to *his* chosen *servants* (2.11; Gen. 18.17-19; Ex.4.15-16; Jer.7.25; Dan.9.10; Lk.1.70). 12: Although a few may be rescued from the catastrophe (5.3), the burden of Amos' message is the thoroughness of the divine punishment (9.1). 15: Houses of ivory, see 1 Kg.22.39 n.

4.1-13: Israel's luxurious excesses and vain piety. Israel has not heeded the LORD's repeated warnings. 1-3: The wealthy and greedy women of *Samaria*, being as guilty as their husbands, will also be punished (compare Is.3.16-26). *Cows of Bashan*, Ps.22.12. 4-5: Israel's love of

and you shall be cast forth into
Harmon,"

says the LORD.

⁴ "Come to Bethel, and transgress;
to Gilgal, and multiply
transgression;
bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tithes every three days;
⁵ offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of
that which is leavened,
and proclaim freewill offerings,
publish them;

for so you love to do, O people of
Israel!"

says the Lord God.

⁶ "I gave you cleanness of teeth in all
your cities,
and lack of bread in all your
places,
yet you did not return to me,"
says the LORD.

⁷ "And I also withheld the rain from
you
when there were yet three months
to the harvest;

I would send rain upon one city,
and send no rain upon another
city;
one field would be rained upon,
and the field on which it did not
rain withered;

⁸ so two or three cities wandered to
one city
to drink water, and were not
satisfied;
yet you did not return to me,"
says the LORD.

⁹ "I smote you with blight and
mildew;
I laid waste¹ your gardens and
your vineyards;
your fig trees and your olive trees
the locust devoured;

yet you did not return to me,"
says the LORD.

¹⁰ "I sent among you a pestilence after
the manner of Egypt;
I slew your young men with the
sword;
I carried away your horses;¹
and I made the stench of your
camp go up into your nostrils;
yet you did not return to me,"
says the LORD.

¹¹ "I overthrew some of you,
as when God overthrew Sodom
and Gomor'rah,
and you were as a brand plucked
out of the burning;
yet you did not return to me,"
says the LORD.

¹² "Therefore thus I will do to you, O
Israel;
because I will do this to you,
prepare to meet your God, O
Israel!"

¹³ For lo, he who forms the mountains,
and creates the wind,
and declares to man what is his
thought;
who makes the morning darkness,
and treads on the heights of the
earth—
the LORD, the God of hosts, is his
name!

5 Hear this word which I take up
over you in lamentation, O house
of Israel:

² "Fallen, no more to rise,
is the virgin Israel;
forsaken on her land,
with none to raise her up."

¹ Cn: Heb the multitude of
² Heb with the captivity of your horses

manifold public rites at the chief sanctuaries is satirized. **6-12:** Having ignored the LORD's repeated warnings through nature and history, Israel must now prepare to meet her God, who is characterized by patient love and inexorable justice. **13:** This doxology, like those in 5.8-9 and 9.5-6, is probably a later addition.

5.1-6.14: The horror and finality of Israel's deserved punishment. **5.1-3:** A lament for the

- ³ For thus says the Lord God:
 "The city that went forth a thousand
 shall have a hundred left,
 and that which went forth a hundred
 shall have ten left
 to the house of Israel."
- ⁴ For thus says the LORD to the house
 of Israel:
 "Seek me and live;
⁵ but do not seek Bethel,
 and do not enter into Gilgal
 or cross over to Beer-sheba;
 for Gilgal shall surely go into exile,
 and Bethel shall come to nought."
- ⁶ Seek the LORD and live,
 lest he break out like fire in the
 house of Joseph,
 and it devour, with none to quench
 it for Bethel,
- ⁷ O you who turn justice to
 wormwood,
 and cast down righteousness to
 the earth!
- ⁸ He who made the Plei'ades and
 Orion,
 and turns deep darkness into the
 morning,
 and darkens the day into night,
 who calls for the waters of the sea,
 and pours them out upon the
 surface of the earth,
 the LORD is his name,
⁹ who makes destruction flash forth
 against the strong,
 so that destruction comes upon
 the fortress.
- ¹⁰ They hate him who reproves in the
 gate,
 and they abhor him who speaks
 the truth.
- ¹¹ Therefore because you trample
 upon the poor
 and take from him exactions of
 wheat,
 you have built houses of hewn stone,
 but you shall not dwell in them;
 you have planted pleasant
 vineyards,
 but you shall not drink their wine.
- ¹² For I know how many are your
 transgressions,
 and how great are your sins—
 you who afflict the righteous, who
 take a bribe,
 and turn aside the needy in the
 gate.
- ¹³ Therefore he who is prudent will
 keep silent in such a time;
 for it is an evil time.
- ¹⁴ Seek good, and not evil,
 that you may live;
 and so the LORD, the God of hosts,
 will be with you,
 as you have said.
- ¹⁵ Hate evil, and love good,
 and establish justice in the gate;
 it may be that the LORD, the God of
 hosts,
 will be gracious to the remnant of
 Joseph.
- ¹⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD, the
 God of hosts, the Lord:
 "In all the squares there shall be
 wailing;
 and in all the streets they shall say,
 'Alas! alas!'
 They shall call the farmers to
 mourning
 and to wailing those who are
 skilled in lamentation,
¹⁷ and in all vineyards there shall be
 wailing,
 for I will pass through the midst
 of you,"
- says the LORD.
- ¹⁸ Woe to you who desire the day of
 the LORD!
 Why would you have the day of
 the LORD?
 It is darkness, and not light;

fallen and forsaken nation. *Went forth a thousand*, a reference to military forces. 4-7, 14-15: There is yet time to seek the LORD and live. 8-9: The second doxology (see 4.13 n.). 10-13, 16-17: Amos warns Israel again about the nature and effect of her transgressions. 18-20: *The day of the LORD*, in which Israelites piously expected to be vindicated against their enemies,

- ¹⁹ as if a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him;
or went into the house and leaned
with his hand against the wall,
and a serpent bit him.
- ²⁰ Is not the day of the LORD darkness,
and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in
it?
- ²¹ "I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your
solemn assemblies.
- ²² Even though you offer me your
burnt offerings and cereal
offerings,
I will not accept them,
and the peace offerings of your fatted
beasts
I will not look upon.
- ²³ Take away from me the noise of
your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will
not listen.
- ²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an
ever-flowing stream.

²⁵ "Did you bring to me sacrifices
and offerings the forty years in the
wilderness, O house of Israel? ²⁶ You
shall take up Sakkuth your king, and
Kaiwan your star-god, your images,^k
which you made for yourselves;
²⁷ therefore I will take you into exile
beyond Damascus," says the LORD,
whose name is the God of hosts.

6 "Woe to those who are at ease in
Zion,
and to those who feel secure on
the mountain of Sama'ria,

- the notable men of the first of the
nations,
to whom the house of Israel come!
- ² Pass over to Calneh, and see;
and thence go to Hamath the
great;
then go down to Gath of the
Philistines.
- Are they better than these kingdoms?
Or is their territory greater than
your territory,
- ³ O you who put far away the evil day,
and bring near the seat of
violence?
- ⁴ "Woe to those who lie upon beds of
ivory,
and stretch themselves upon their
couches,
and eat lambs from the flock,
and calves from the midst of the
stall;
- ⁵ who sing idle songs to the sound of
the harp,
and like David invent for
themselves instruments of
music;
- ⁶ who drink wine in bowls,
and anoint themselves with the
finest oils,
but are not grieved over the ruin
of Joseph!
- ⁷ Therefore they shall now be the
first of those to go into exile,
and the revelry of those who
stretch themselves shall pass
away."

- ⁸ The Lord God has sworn by
himself
(says the LORD, the God of hosts):
"I abhor the pride of Jacob,

^k Heb your images, your star-god

will be darkness and gloom (Am.8.9-14; see Zeph.1.14-18 n.). Amos' profound reinterpretation of this popular concept is among his most significant contributions. **21-27**: The LORD delights not in an abundance of festivals and sacrifices but in *justice* and *righteousness*. Verse 24 expresses the heart of Amos' preaching. **25**: In the desert Israel had a pure, direct relation with God which rendered sacrifices unnecessary (Jer.2.2-3; Hos.2.14-20; 9.10). **26**: *Sakkuth* and *Kaiwan* designate known Assyrian deities (Acts 7.42-43). **6.1-7**: The Israelites, who feel themselves secure in their false confidence and lie upon beds of ivory in luxurious self-indulgence, will be the first of those whom God will send into exile. **2**: Since *Calneh* in northern Syria and *Hamath* on the Orontes were later captured by Assyria, this verse may be an addition. **5**: *David*, 1 Chr. 23.5; Neh.12.36. **8-14**: Because Israel has turned faith into pride (Is.28.1; Hos.5.5; Am.8.7)

and hate his strongholds;
and I will deliver up the city and
all that is in it."

9 And if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. ¹⁰ And when a man's kinsman, he who burns him,¹ shall take him up to bring the bones out of the house, and shall say to him who is in the innermost parts of the house, "Is there still any one with you?" he shall say, "No"; and he shall say, "Hush! We must not mention the name of the LORD."

¹¹ For behold, the LORD commands,
and the great house shall be
smitten into fragments,
and the little house into bits.

¹² Do horses run upon rocks?
Does one plow the sea with oxen?
But you have turned justice into
poison
and the fruit of righteousness into
wormwood—

¹³ you who rejoice in Lo-debar,ⁿ
who say, "Have we not by our
own strength
taken Karnaim^o for ourselves?"

¹⁴ "For behold, I will raise up against
you a nation,
O house of Israel," says the LORD,
the God of hosts;
"and they shall oppress you from
the entrance of Hamath
to the Brook of the Arabah."

7 Thus the Lord God showed me:
behold, he was forming locusts in
the beginning of the shooting up of the
latter growth; and lo, it was the latter
growth after the king's mowings.
² When they had finished eating the
grass of the land, I said,

"O Lord God, forgive, I beseech
thee!
How can Jacob stand?
He is so small!"

³ The LORD repented concerning this;
"It shall not be," said the LORD.

4 Thus the Lord God showed me:
behold, the Lord God was calling for a
judgment by fire, and it devoured the
great deep and was eating up the land.

⁶ Then I said,
"O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee!
How can Jacob stand?
He is so small!"

⁶ The LORD repented concerning this;
"This also shall not be," said the
Lord God.

7 He showed me: behold, the Lord
was standing beside a wall built with
a plumb line, with a plumb line in his
hand. ⁸ And the LORD said to me,
"Amos, what do you see?" And I said,
"A plumb line." Then the Lord said,
"Behold, I am setting a plumb line
in the midst of my people Israel;
I will never again pass by them;
⁹ the high places of Isaac shall be
made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall
be laid waste,
and I will rise against the house
of Jerobo'am with the sword."

10 Then Amazi'ah the priest of
Bethel sent to Jerobo'am king of Is-
rael, saying, "Amos has conspired
against you in the midst of the house
of Israel; the land is not able to bear
all his words. ¹¹ For thus Amos has
said,

*1 Or who makes a burning for him
n Or a thing of nought
o Or horns*

and justice into poison, she will be thoroughly punished. **9-10:** The sequel to siege or pestilence. *Not mention the name of the LORD*, perhaps out of fear of further judgment. **14:** From *Hamath* to the *Arabah*, the farthest extent of Israelite territory (see 2 Kg.14.25).

7.1-9: The first three of five visions of God's judgment. **1-3:** Judgment by locusts (Jl.1.4; 2.3). **4-6:** Judgment by fire (Jl.1.19). These first two judgments are halted when Amos pleads for mercy. **7-9:** Having measured his people with a *plumb line* (2 Kg.21.13-15) and found them warped beyond correction, the LORD decrees the irrevocable sentence of destruction.

7.10-17. Amos and Amaziah. A prose biographical incident, introduced here perhaps because of the threat against the house of Jeroboam in v. 9. Amaziah was the official priest of the royal

'Jerobo'am shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land.' "

¹² And Amazi'ah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³ but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

¹⁴ Then Amos answered Amazi'ah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son;^p but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, ¹⁵ and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

¹⁶ "Now therefore hear the word of the LORD.

You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,
and do not preach against the
house of Isaac.'

¹⁷ Therefore thus says the LORD:
'Your wife shall be a harlot in the
city,
and your sons and your daughters
shall fall by the sword,
and your land shall be parceled
out by line;
you yourself shall die in an unclean
land,
and Israel shall surely go into
exile away from its land.'

8 Thus the Lord God showed me:
behold, a basket of summer fruit.^q

² And he said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit."^q Then the LORD said to me,

"The end^r has come upon my
people Israel;

I will never again pass by them.

³ The songs of the temple^s shall
become wailings in that day,"
says the Lord God;

"the dead bodies shall be many;
in every place they shall be cast
out in silence."^t

⁴ Hear this, you who trample upon the
needy,
and bring the poor of the land to
an end,

⁵ saying, "When will the new moon
be over,
that we may sell grain?
And the sabbath,
that we may offer wheat for sale,
that we may make the ephah small
and the shekel great,
and deal deceitfully with false
balances,

⁶ that we may buy the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of
sandals,
and sell the refuse of the wheat?"

⁷ The LORD has sworn by the pride
of Jacob:
"Surely I will never forget any of
their deeds.

⁸ Shall not the land tremble on this
account,
and every one mourn who dwells
in it,
and all of it rise like the Nile,
and be tossed about and sink
again, like the Nile of Egypt?"

⁹ "And on that day," says the Lord
God,
"I will make the sun go down at
noon,
and darken the earth in broad
daylight.

¹⁰ I will turn your feasts into
mourning,
and all your songs into
lamentation;

^p Or one of the sons of the prophets
^q Heb qayits ^r Heb qets
^s Or palace ^t Or be silent!

sanctuary at Bethel. 14: Amos asserts that he is not a professional prophet (1 Sam.9.6-10; Mic.3.5-8,11) or a member of a prophetic guild (1 Sam.10.5; 1 Kg.22.6; 2 Kg.2.3,5), but a layman whom the LORD took and sent to prophesy to his people (3.3-8; 2 Sam.7.8).

8.1-3: **Fourth vision.** A basket of ripe summer fruit symbolizes the immediacy of Israel's end.

8.4-14: **The indictment of Israel** and the coming of the day of mourning (see 5.18-20 n.).

5-6: The merchants are impatient for the holy days to pass so they can resume their fraudulent

- I will bring sackcloth upon all loins,
and baldness on every head;
I will make it like the mourning for
an only son,
and the end of it like a bitter day.
- ¹¹ "Behold, the days are coming," says
the Lord God,
"when I will send a famine on the
land;
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst
for water,
but of hearing the words of the
LORD.
- ¹² They shall wander from sea to sea,
and from north to east;
they shall run to and fro, to seek the
word of the LORD,
but they shall not find it.
- ¹³ "In that day the fair virgins and the
young men
shall faint for thirst.
- ¹⁴ Those who swear by Ash'imah of
Sama'ria,
and say, 'As thy god lives, O Dan,'
and, 'As the way of Beer-sheba lives,'
they shall fall, and never rise
again."
- 9** I saw the LORD standing beside^u
the altar, and he said:
"Smite the capitals until the
thresholds shake,
and shatter them on the heads of
all the people;"
and what are left of them I will slay
with the sword;
not one of them shall flee away,
not one of them shall escape.
- ² "Though they dig into Sheol,
from there shall my hand take
them;
- though they climb up to heaven,
from there I will bring them down.
- ³ Though they hide themselves on the
top of Carmel,
from there I will search out and
take them;
and though they hide from my sight
at the bottom of the sea,
there I will command the serpent,
and it shall bite them.
- ⁴ And though they go into captivity
before their enemies,
there I will command the sword,
and it shall slay them;
and I will set my eyes upon them
for evil and not for good."
- ⁵ The Lord, GOD of hosts,
he who touches the earth and it
melts,
and all who dwell in it mourn,
and all of it rises like the Nile,
and sinks again, like the Nile of
Egypt;
- ⁶ who builds his upper chambers in
the heavens,
and founds his vault upon the
earth;
who calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out upon the
surface of the earth—
the LORD is his name.
- ⁷ "Are you not like the Ethiopians to
me,
O people of Israel?" says the
LORD.
"Did I not bring up Israel from the
land of Egypt,
and the Philistines from Caphtor
and the Syrians from Kir?"
- ⁸ Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD
are upon the sinful kingdom,

^u Or upon ^v Heb all of them

business (Is.1.13-17; Lev.19.35-36; Dt.25.13-16). **13-14:** The patron deities of pagan shrines, from farthest north (*Dan*) to farthest south (*Beer-sheba*), will be of no help in that day.

9.1-4: Fifth vision. The LORD, standing beside the altar, commands the destruction from which not one of his people shall escape. **2:** *Sheol*, the place of the dead (Job 10.19-22; Is.14.11, 15), offers man no hiding place from God (Ps.139.7-12).

9.5-6: The third doxology, see 4.13 n.

9.7-10: Israel has no claim to special privilege in the moral realm, for the LORD will destroy every sinful kingdom. Here Amos' universalism (chs. 1-2) complements the doctrine of election (3.2). **7:** *Caphtor*, see Jg.13.1 n. *Kir*, see 1.5 n.

and I will destroy it from the
surface of the ground;
except that I will not utterly
destroy the house of Jacob,"
says the LORD.

and all the nations who are called
by my name,"
says the LORD who does this.

⁹ "For lo, I will command,
and shake the house of Israel
among all the nations
as one shakes with a sieve,
but no pebble shall fall upon the
earth.

¹⁰ All the sinners of my people shall
die by the sword,
who say, 'Evil shall not overtake
or meet us.'

¹¹ "In that day I will raise up
the booth of David that is fallen
and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins,
and rebuild it as in the days of
old;

¹² that they may possess the remnant
of Edom

¹³ "Behold, the days are coming," says
the LORD,

"when the plowman shall overtake
the reaper
and the treader of grapes him
who sows the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.

¹⁴ I will restore the fortunes of my
people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined
cities and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink
their wine,
and they shall make gardens and
eat their fruit.

¹⁵ I will plant them upon their land,
and they shall never again be
plucked up
out of the land which I have given
them,"

says the LORD your God.

9.11-15: Prophecy of the restoration of the booth of David (i.e. the Davidic dynasty) and the glorious age to come when *the mountains shall drip sweet wine* and the LORD shall *plant* his people again *upon their land* (vv. 13-15). This section, though almost certainly appended later to balance Amos' harsh message (see Introduction to Micah), expands the prophet's own thought (3.12; 5.3,4,6,14-15). **11-12:** Acts 15.16-17. **13:** See Jl.3.18-21 n.

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

Nothing is known of the person of the prophet Obadiah; even his name is not distinctive (see v. 1 n.). The problems of date and composition of his brief work, the shortest book in the Old Testament, are not easily solved. Some of the oracles in the book were spoken, or written, soon after Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587 (586) B.C. Obadiah may not have been the originator of these passages, but may have borrowed from collections of sayings transmitted orally by prophetic circles. This could account for the striking similarity between vv. 1–9 and Jer.49.7–22. But if they were not originally Obadiah's, they represent his viewpoint, and tradition regards him as their author.

Verses 10–14 indict the Edomites for outrageous and hostile actions when their Israelite brothers were in peril. Starting from these recent events in the experience of his people, Obadiah, like Joel (see Introduction to Joel), moves on to portray their future consummation. Verses 15–18 announce the day of the LORD's recompense upon the nations for their shameful behavior. A final section (vv. 19–21) proclaims the return of Israel's exiles to the Promised Land, their dominion over Edom, and the LORD's universal sovereignty.

1 THE VISION OF OBADI'AH.

Thus says the Lord God concerning
Edom:

We have heard tidings from the
LORD,
and a messenger has been sent
among the nations:
"Rise up! let us rise against her for
battle!"

2 Behold, I will make you small
among the nations,
you shall be utterly despised.

3 The pride of your heart has
deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the
rock,^a
whose dwelling is high,
who say in your heart,
"Who will bring me down to the
ground?"

4 Though you soar aloft like the eagle,
though your nest is set among the
stars,
thence I will bring you down,
says the LORD.

5 If thieves came to you,

if plunderers by night—
how you have been destroyed!—
would they not steal only enough
for themselves?

If grape gatherers came to you,
would they not leave gleanings?

6 How Esau has been pillaged,
his treasures sought out!

7 All your allies have deceived you,
they have driven you to the
border;

your confederates have prevailed
against you;

your trusted friends have set a
trap under you—
there is no understanding of it.

8 Will I not on that day, says the
LORD,
destroy the wise men out of Edom,
and understanding out of Mount
Esau?

9 And your mighty men shall be
dismayed, O Teman,
so that every man from Mount
Esau will be cut off by slaughter.

10 For the violence done to your
brother Jacob,

^a Or *Sela*

1: Introduction. *Vision*, see Nah.1.1 n. *Obadiah*, meaning "Servant of the LORD," is the name of twelve different persons in the Old Testament. *Edom*, southeast of Palestine. 2–4: The humbling of Edom. The non-Israelite *nations*, the Gentiles, will share in the spectacle. 3: The same Hebrew word means *rock* and *Sela*, an Edomite fortress also called Teman (v. 9) and Petra. 4: *Says the LORD*, see Am.1.3 n. 5–7: The pillaging and betrayal of Edom. 6: *Esau*, Jacob's twin, was the father of the Edomites (Gen.25.30; 36.1). 8–11: The destruction of Edom.

- shame shall cover you,
and you shall be cut off for ever.
- ¹¹ On the day that you stood aloof,
on the day that strangers carried
off his wealth,
and foreigners entered his gates
and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you were like one of them.
- ¹² But you should not have gloated
over the day of your brother
in the day of his misfortune;
you should not have rejoiced over
the people of Judah
in the day of their ruin;
you should not have boasted
in the day of distress.
- ¹³ You should not have entered the
gate of my people
in the day of his calamity;
you should not have gloated over his
disaster
in the day of his calamity;
you should not have looted his goods
in the day of his calamity.
- ¹⁴ You should not have stood at the
parting of the ways
to cut off his fugitives;
you should not have delivered up
his survivors
in the day of distress.
- ¹⁵ For the day of the LORD is near upon
all the nations.
As you have done, it shall be done
to you,
your deeds shall return on your
own head.
- ¹⁶ For as you have drunk upon my
holy mountain,
- all the nations round about shall
drink;
they shall drink, and stagger,^b
and shall be as though they had
not been.
- ¹⁷ But in Mount Zion there shall be
those that escape,
and it shall be holy;
and the house of Jacob shall possess
their own possessions.
- ¹⁸ The house of Jacob shall be a fire,
and the house of Joseph a flame,
and the house of Esau stubble;
they shall burn them and consume
them,
and there shall be no survivor to
the house of Esau;
for the LORD has spoken.
- ¹⁹ Those of the Negeb shall possess
Mount Esau,
and those of the Shephe'lah the
land of the Philistines;
they shall possess the land of
E'phraim and the land of
Sama'ria
and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.
- ²⁰ The exiles in Halah^c who are of
the people of Israel
shall possess^d Phoenicia as far
as Zar'ephath;
and the exiles of Jerusalem who
are in Sephar'ad
shall possess the cities of the
Negeb.
- ²¹ Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion
to rule Mount Esau;
and the kingdom shall be the
LORD's.

^b Cn: Heb swallow^c Cn: Heb this army^d Cn: Heb which

8: Compare Zeph.1.9,10; 3.16; Hag.2.23. Edom was renowned for her wise men (Jer.49.7). **10:** Jacob was the father of the Israelites (Gen.49.2; Is.43.1). **11:** By failing to help Israel (Judah) in his adversity, Edom became as guilty as the foreigners who entered his gates. Obadiah shares this bitterness against Edom with other writers of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. (Ps.137.7; Is.34.5-7; 63.1-6; Lam.4.21; Ezek.25.12-14; Mal.1.2-5; see also, from an earlier period, Am.1.11-12). **12-14:** Eight-fold indictment of Edom, cast in a very forceful, repetitive style. **15-18:** The day of the LORD's judgment upon all the nations, especially Edom. But Israel shall be saved. **15:** The day of the LORD, see Am.5.18 n. **16:** Compare Jer.25.15-29. **17:** Jl.2.32. **19-21:** The division of the land, and the LORD's kingship. **19:** Negeb is the arid south; Shephelah, the western foothills. Gilead is in Transjordan. **20:** Halah (the Hebrew text is uncertain) is in northern Mesopotamia (2 Kg.17.6); Sepharad, perhaps in Asia Minor. **21:** Israelite saviors shall govern Edom; and the LORD shall rule over all (Pss.22.28; 103.19).

THE BOOK OF JONAH

The book of Jonah is unique among the prophetic books. It contains no collection of oracles in verse against Israel and foreign nations, but presents a prose narrative about the prophet himself. Instead of portraying a prophet who is an obedient servant of the LORD, calling his people to repentance, it features a recalcitrant prophet who flees from his mission and sulks when his hearers repent.

The book is a didactic narrative which has taken older material from the realm of popular legend and put it to new, more consequential use. Its two parts, chs. 1-2 and 3-4, are now united by having in common a central character (Jonah), a similar plot (his ironical conversion of the heathen), and an identical theme (the breadth of God's saving love).

The principal figure of this artful story is an obscure Galilean prophet from Gath-hepher who counseled Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.) in a successful conflict with the Syrians (2 Kg.14.25) and with whom some of the earlier traditional material was probably associated. Its author, however, must have lived in the post-exilic period because he betrays the influence of Jeremiah and Second Isaiah, opposes the narrow Jewish nationalism exhibited in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, and writes in a late form of Hebrew. A date sometime in the fourth or third century B.C. would meet these requirements.

Skilfully and forcefully the book calls Israel back to her universal mission of preaching to all nations the wideness of God's mercy and forgiveness (Gen.12.1-3; Is.42.6-7; 49.6). In spirit, therefore, it remains truly prophetic and justifies its place in the Book of the Twelve Prophets.

NOW THE WORD OF THE LORD came to Jonah the son of Amit'tai, saying, ² "Arise, go to Nin'ev'eh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me." ³ But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

⁴ But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god; and they threw the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. ⁶ So the captain came and said to

him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call upon your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we do not perish."

⁷ And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. ⁸ Then they said to him, "Tell us, on whose account this evil has come upon us? What is your occupation? And whence do you come? What is your country? And of what people are you?" ⁹ And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

¹⁰ Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

1.1-16: Jonah's first call to preach to Nineveh, although unheeded, results in the conversion of the heathen sailors. **1-3:** Jonah rebels against the divine commission and attempts to flee from God. **1:** *The word of the LORD*, Hos.1.1 n. The word Jonah means "dove." **2:** For the wickedness of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, see Nah. ch. 3. **3:** *Tarshish*, probably in southern Spain (Is.23.1-12; Ezek.27.12,25), represents the farthest point to which Jonah could sail. **4-16:** The LORD procures Jonah's recall. He causes a great tempest; for *the LORD, the God of heaven*, rules

11 Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. ¹² He said to them, "Take me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." ¹³ Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. ¹⁴ Therefore they cried to the LORD, "We beseech thee, O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood; for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee." ¹⁵ So they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

17^a And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, ² saying,

"I called to the LORD, out of my distress,
and he answered me;
out of the belly of Sheol I cried,
and thou didst hear my voice.

³ For thou didst cast me into the deep,
into the heart of the seas,
and the flood was round about me;

all thy waves and thy billows
passed over me.

⁴ Then I said, 'I am cast out
from thy presence;
how shall I again look
upon thy holy temple?'

⁵ The waters closed in over me,
the deep was round about me;
weeds were wrapped about my
head

⁶ at the roots of the mountains.

I went down to the land
whose bars closed upon me for
ever;

yet thou didst bring up my life from
the Pit,

O LORD my God.

⁷ When my soul fainted within me,
I remembered the LORD;
and my prayer came to thee,
into thy holy temple.

⁸ Those who pay regard to vain idols
forsake their true loyalty.

⁹ But I with the voice of thanksgiving
will sacrifice to thee;
what I have vowed I will pay.

Deliverance belongs to the LORD!"

¹⁰ And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ² "Arise, go to Nin'evah, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." ³ So Jonah arose and went to Nin'evah, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nin'evah was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. ⁴ Jonah began to go into

^a Ch 2.1 in Heb

the sea and the dry land (Pss.65.5-7; 107.23-32; 139.7-12; Mk.4.35-41; Acts ch. 27). 16: Jonah becomes a missionary of his God in spite of himself.

1.17-2.10: Jonah is miraculously saved and returned to dry land. The great fish is not the principal item in the story; like the tempest, the east wind, the gourd, and the worm, it is an obedient agent of God's purpose. 17: Mt.12.38-41.

2.1-9: Jonah's prayer. This psalm of thanksgiving for past deliverance (rather than a petition for help) has only a general theological connection with the prose narrative and was probably not composed by the author of the tale. 2: Pss.18.6; 120.1. Sheol, or Pit (v. 6), is the region of darkness and death (Ps.88.3-12). 3a: Mic.7.19. 3b: Ps.42.7. 5-6: Ps.69.2. 7: Ps.143.4.

3.1-4.11: Jonah and Nineveh. Jonah's second call, although reluctantly and grudgingly obeyed, results in the wholesale conversion of the heathen city. 3: Exceedingly great city; excavations have revealed a city about three miles in length and somewhat less than one and one-half miles wide. The message of the story, not the size of the city, is of primary import.

the city, going a day's journey. And he cried, "Yet forty days, and Nin'evah shall be overthrown!" ⁵ And the people of Nin'evah believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

⁶ Then tidings reached the king of Nin'evah, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷ And he made proclamation and published through Nin'evah, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water, ⁸ but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God; yea, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands. ⁹ Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?"

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it.

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. ² And he prayed to the LORD and said, "I pray thee, LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding

in steadfast love, and repentest of evil.

³ Therefore now, O LORD, take my life from me, I beseech thee, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?" ⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

⁶ And the LORD God appointed a plant,^b and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant.^b ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm which attacked the plant,^b so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint; and he asked that he might die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." ⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?"^b And he said, "I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." ¹⁰ And the LORD said, "You pity the plant,^b for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should not I pity Nin'evah, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

b Heb *qiqayon*, probably the castor oil plant

5-10: Again Jonah is a successful missionary in spite of himself. 7-9: The pagan king sets a better example than Jonah (4.1). 4.2: Ex.34.6. 11: The point of the book is that God loves every creature in his universe, even the *cattle*.

THE BOOK OF MICAH

The superscription to this book indicates that Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah. The characteristics of the era in which Micah spoke were similar, therefore, to those seen in the ministries of Hosea and Isaiah. The prosperous half-century of peace enjoyed by the northern kingdom of Israel was ended by the death of Jeroboam II and the westward advance of the Assyrians. In 731 B.C. the fall of Damascus marked the end of Syria's freedom; a brief decade later brought the same fate to Israel and its capital at Samaria. Although the kingdom of Judah was spared at that time from the Assyrian yoke, the anti-Assyrian policies of Hezekiah brought Sennacherib of Assyria to Judah in 701 B.C., and Judah was left a weak vassal state.

But unlike Isaiah, Micah was neither of noble descent nor a native of the capital. He came, rather, from the common people, being a citizen of the small village of Moresheth in the Judean foothills southwest of Jerusalem. Therefore Micah looked upon the corruptions and pretensions of the capital through different eyes. Perhaps it was this difference which accounts for Micah's prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem (3.9-12), a major note distinguishing him from his contemporaries and for which he was long remembered (Jer.26.18).

Micah stands solidly with Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah as a fierce champion of pure worship of the LORD and shares with them both the word of judgment against his people (1.2-3.12; 6.1-7.7) and the promise of divine forgiveness and hope in a future restoration. The latter theme of the prophet comes to us in a post-exilic expanded and edited form in 4.1-5.15. The picture of the restored Jerusalem in 7.8-20 comes from the post-exilic period.

THE WORD OF THE LORD THAT came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

² Hear, you peoples, all of you;
hearken, O earth, and all that is in it;

and let the Lord GOD be a witness
against you,
the Lord from his holy temple.

³ For behold, the LORD is coming
forth out of his place,
and will come down and tread
upon the high places of the earth.

⁴ And the mountains will melt under him
and the valleys will be cleft,
like wax before the fire,

like waters poured down a steep place.

⁵ All this is for the transgression of Jacob
and for the sins of the house of Israel.

What is the transgression of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?
And what is the sin of the house^a
of Judah?

Is it not Jerusalem?

⁶ Therefore I will make Samaria a
heap in the open country,
a place for planting vineyards;
and I will pour down her stones into
the valley,
and uncover her foundations.

⁷ All her images shall be beaten to pieces,

^a Gk Tg Compare Syr: Heb *what are the high places*

1.1: Superscription. *The word of the LORD . . . which he saw*, see Hos.1.1 n. and Nah.1.1 n. Jotham reigned over Judah from 750 to 735 B.C.; Ahaz from 735 to 715; and Hezekiah from 715 to 687.

1.2-3.12: Threats directed against Samaria and Jerusalem because of the corruption of their religious and political leaders form the first major section of Micah's book. **1.2-7:** Samaria will be destroyed when the LORD comes in judgment to punish the house of Israel for its transgression. This oracle is to be dated before 721 B.C. **2:** Compare Is.1.2; Hab.2.20. **8-16:** In a

all her hires shall be burned with
fire,
and all her idols I will lay waste;
for from the hire of a harlot she
gathered them,
and to the hire of a harlot they
shall return.

For this I will lament and wail;
I will go stripped and naked;
I will make lamentation like the
jackals,
and mourning like the ostriches.

⁹ For her wound^b is incurable;
and it has come to Judah,
it has reached to the gate of my
people,
to Jerusalem.

¹⁰ Tell it not in Gath,
weep not at all;
in Beth-le-aph'rah
roll yourselves in the dust.

¹¹ Pass on your way,
inhabitants of Shaphir,
in nakedness and shame;
the inhabitants of Za'anani
do not come forth;
the wailing of Beth-e'zel
shall take away from you its
standing place.

¹² For the inhabitants of Maroth
wait anxiously for good,
because evil has come down from
the LORD
to the gate of Jerusalem.

¹³ Harness the steeds to the chariots,
inhabitants of Lachish;
you were^c the beginning of sin
to the daughter of Zion,
for in you were found
the transgressions of Israel.

¹⁴ Therefore you shall give parting
gifts
to Mo'resheth-gath;

the houses of Achzib shall be a
deceitful thing
to the kings of Israel.

¹⁵ I will again bring a conqueror upon
you,
inhabitants of Mare'shah;
the glory of Israel
shall come to Adullam.

¹⁶ Make yourselves bald and cut off
your hair,
for the children of your delight;
make yourselves as bald as the eagle,
for they shall go from you into
exile.

2 Woe to those who devise
wickedness
and work evil upon their beds!
When the morning dawns, they
perform it,
because it is in the power of their
hand.

² They covet fields, and seize them;
and houses, and take them away;
they oppress a man and his house,
a man and his inheritance.

³ Therefore thus says the LORD:
Behold, against this family I am
devising evil,
from which you cannot remove
your necks;
and you shall not walk haughtily,
for it will be an evil time.

⁴ In that day they shall take up a taunt
song against you,
and wail with bitter lamentation,
and say, "We are utterly ruined;
he changes the portion of my
people;
how he removes it from me!
Among our captors^d he divides
our fields."

^b Gk Syr Vg: Heb wounds

^c Cn: Heb it was

^d Cn: Heb the rebellious

series of forceful literary puns on the names of the areas to be devastated, the prophet laments that the wound of his people is incurable and that God will bring a conqueror even to the gate of Jerusalem. This lament, perhaps acted out by the prophet himself, *stripped and naked* (v. 8), may refer to the campaign of 701 B.C. 2.1-11: Because of their uncleanness, which Micah depicts with clarity (v. 2) and bitter realism (v. 11), the Israelites must experience a grievous destruction, for the LORD will hold the nation responsible for its social and moral abuses. 1-2: Ps.36.4; Is.5.8-12; 32.7; Am.8.4. 3: *An evil time*, Jer.18.11; compare Am.5.13. 4: A taunt song, compare Hab.2.6. 6: Micah quotes the popular preaching of the false prophets

- ⁵ Therefore you will have none to cast the line by lot in the assembly of the LORD.
- ⁶ "Do not preach"—thus they preach—"one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us."
- ⁷ Should this be said, O house of Jacob?
Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient?
Are these his doings?
Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly?
- ⁸ But you rise against my people^e as an enemy;
you strip the robe from the peaceful,^f
from those who pass by trustingly with no thought of war.
- ⁹ The women of my people you drive out
from their pleasant houses;
from their young children you take away
my glory for ever.
- ¹⁰ Arise and go,
for this is no place to rest;
because of uncleanness that destroys with a grievous destruction.
- ¹¹ If a man should go about and utter wind and lies,
saying, "I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,"
he would be the preacher for this people!
- ¹² I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob,
I will gather the remnant of Israel;
I will set them together
like sheep in a fold,
like a flock in its pasture,
a noisy multitude of men.
- ¹³ He who opens the breach will go up before them;

they will break through and pass the gate,
going out by it.
Their king will pass on before them,
the LORD at their head.

- 3** And I said:
Hear, you heads of Jacob
and rulers of the house of Israel!
Is it not for you to know justice?—
- ² you who hate the good and love the evil,
who tear the skin from off my people,
and their flesh from off their bones;
- ³ who eat the flesh of my people,
and flay their skin from off them,
and break their bones in pieces,
and chop them up like meat^g in a kettle,
like flesh in a caldron.
- ⁴ Then they will cry to the LORD,
but he will not answer them;
he will hide his face from them at that time,
because they have made their deeds evil.
- ⁵ Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who cry "Peace"
when they have something to eat,
but declare war against him
who puts nothing into their mouths.
- ⁶ Therefore it shall be night to you,
without vision,
and darkness to you, without divination.
The sun shall go down upon the prophets,
and the day shall be black over them;

^e Cn: Heb yesterday my people rose
^f Cn: Heb from before a garment
^g Gk: Heb as

(Is.30.10; Jer.5.31; Am.2.12. 12-13: This picture of the restored remnant of all Israel, which presupposes the capture of the country and its destruction, was probably contributed by an exilic or post-exilic editor. 3.1-4: The avaricious and irresponsible deeds of Israel's rulers. 2: Compare Is.5.20. Micah here uses the figures of a butcher and wild beast. 4: Futile cry to the LORD, compare Is.1.15. 5-8: The mercenary prophets and seers, who prostitute their solemn office, shall be cut off from God, the source of true revelation. 7: Seers, see 1 Sam.9.9.

- ⁷ the seers shall be disgraced,
and the diviners put to shame;
they shall all cover their lips,
for there is no answer from God.
- ⁸ But as for me, I am filled with
power,
with the Spirit of the LORD,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin.
- ⁹ Hear this, you heads of the house
of Jacob
and rulers of the house of Israel,
who abhor justice
and pervert all equity,
¹⁰ who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with wrong.
- ¹¹ Its heads give judgment for a bribe,
its priests teach for hire,
its prophets divine for money;
yet they lean upon the LORD and say,
"Is not the LORD in the midst of
us?
No evil shall come upon us."
¹² Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of
ruins,
and the mountain of the house a
wooded height.
- 4** It shall come to pass in the latter
days
that the mountain of the house of
the LORD
shall be established as the highest of
the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the
hills;
- and peoples shall flow to it,
² and many nations shall come,
and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain
of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the
law,
and the word of the LORD from
Jerusalem.
- ³ He shall judge between many
peoples,
and shall decide for strong
nations afar off;
and they shall beat their swords into
plowshares,
and their spears into pruning
hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against
nation,
neither shall they learn war any
more;
- ⁴ but they shall sit every man under
his vine and under his fig tree,
and none shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the LORD of
hosts has spoken.
- ⁵ For all the peoples walk
each in the name of its god,
but we will walk in the name of the
LORD our God
for ever and ever.
- ⁶ In that day, says the LORD,
I will assemble the lame
and gather those who have been
driven away,

8: In contrast with the false officials, Micah's call has imbued him with power, justice, and might, because it filled him with *the Spirit of the LORD* (Is.11.2; 61.1; Ezek.2.2). **9-12:** The first section reaches its climax with Micah's bold assertion that, because of corruption which permeates all of its rulers, Jerusalem and the temple itself shall be destroyed. **9:** This recalls Am.5.6-7. **10:** Compare Hab.2.12. **12:** This was quoted at the trial of Jeremiah (Jer.26.18).

4.1-5.15: Prophecies of Israel's glorious future and the restoration of the Davidic kingdom constitute the second major section of the book. Though many scholars date the origin of these prophecies in the post-exilic period, they are quite possibly based on genuine oracles from Micah, edited in their present form after the Exile. **1-5:** The exaltation of Jerusalem as a center of worship by the nations; the new age of peace. Verses 1-3 are duplicated in Is.2.2-4. Here, as sometimes elsewhere in the prophetic books, the author of a passage may be unknown; compare Is. chs. 40-66. **1:** *The mountain of the house*, Mount Zion. *Highest of the mountains*, compare Ezek.40.2. **4:** Compare Zech.3.10. **5:** Compare Is.2.5. **6-8:** The LORD's gracious

and those whom I have afflicted;
⁷ and the lame I will make the remnant;
 and those who were cast off, a strong nation;
 and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
 from this time forth and for evermore.

⁸ And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come,
 the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.

⁹ Now why do you cry aloud?
 Is there no king in you?
 Has your counselor perished,
 that pangs have seized you like a woman in travail?
¹⁰ Writhe and groan,^h O daughter of Zion,
 like a woman in travail;
 for now you shall go forth from the city
 and dwell in the open country;
 you shall go to Babylon.
 There you shall be rescued,
 there the LORD will redeem you
 from the hand of your enemies.

¹¹ Now many nations
 are assembled against you,
 saying, "Let her be profaned,
 and let our eyes gaze upon Zion."

¹² But they do not know
 the thoughts of the LORD,
 they do not understand his plan,
 that he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor.

¹³ Arise and thresh,

O daughter of Zion,
 for I will make your horn iron
 and your hoofs bronze;
 you shall beat in pieces many peoples,
 and shall devote their gain to the LORD,
 their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth.

⁵ Now you are walled about with a wall;^k
 siege is laid against us;
 with a rod they strike upon the cheek
 the ruler of Israel.

²¹ But you, O Bethlehem Eph'rathah,
 who are little to be among the clans of Judah,
 from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel,
 whose origin is from of old,
 from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in travail has brought forth;
 then the rest of his brethren shall return
 to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
 And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth.

⁵ And this shall be peace,

^h Heb uncertain ⁱ Gk Syr Tg: Heb *I will*

^j Ch 4.14 in Heb

^k Cn Compare Gk: Heb obscure

^l Ch 5.1 in Heb

exaltation of the lame and rejected, for whom he will restore his kingdom (Is.40.9-11; Ezek. 34.11-16; 37.24-28; Zeph.3.19; Jn.10.7-16). **4.9-5.1:** In three paragraphs the humiliation and travail which Israel must experience in the near future (see "now" in 4.9,11, and 5.1) are contrasted with her final triumph. **4.9:** Compare 5.3 and Jer.8.19. **10:** The reference to exile in Babylon is a later addition (Is.48.20; 52.9-12). **5.2-6:** The shepherd king who is to be ruler of Israel will be born not in Jerusalem, but, like David, in Bethlehem, among the insignificant clans of Judah. **2:** *Bethlehem*, Gen.35.19; Ru.4.11; 1 Sam.17.12. *Me*, refers to God. *From of old* could mean from the days of David, rather than pre-existence from the beginning of time. The New Testament interprets this statement as a prophecy of the birth of Christ (Mt.2.6; compare also Jn.7.40-43). **6:** *The land of Nimrod*, synonymous with Assyria (Gen.10.9-11).

when the Assyrian comes into our land
and treads upon our soil,^m
that we will raise against him seven
shepherds
and eight princes of men;
⁶ they shall rule the land of Assyria
with the sword,
and the land of Nimrod with the
drawn sword;ⁿ
and they^o shall deliver us from the
Assyrian
when he comes into our land
and treads within our border.

⁷ Then the remnant of Jacob shall be
in the midst of many peoples
like dew from the LORD,
like showers upon the grass,
which tarry not for men
nor wait for the sons of men.
⁸ And the remnant of Jacob shall be
among the nations,
in the midst of many peoples,
like a lion among the beasts of the
forest,
like a young lion among the flocks
of sheep,
which, when it goes through, treads
down
and tears in pieces, and there is
none to deliver.
⁹ Your hand shall be lifted up over
your adversaries,
and all your enemies shall be cut
off.
¹⁰ And in that day, says the LORD,
I will cut off your horses from
among you
and will destroy your chariots;
¹¹ and I will cut off the cities of your
land
and throw down all your
strongholds;

¹² and I will cut off sorceries from your
hand,
and you shall have no more
soothsayers;
¹³ and I will cut off your images
and your pillars from among you,
and you shall bow down no more
to the work of your hands;
¹⁴ and I will root out your Ashe'rim
from among you
and destroy your cities.
¹⁵ And in anger and wrath I will
execute vengeance
upon the nations that did not obey.

6 Hear what the LORD says:
Arise, plead your case before the
mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.
² Hear, you mountains, the
controversy of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations
of the earth;
for the LORD has a controversy with
his people,
and he will contend with Israel.
³ "O my people, what have I done
to you?
In what have I wearied you?
Answer me!
⁴ For I brought you up from the land
of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house
of bondage;
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.
⁵ O my people, remember what
Balak king of Moab devised,
and what Balaam the son of Be'or
answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to
Gilgal,

m Gk: Heb in our palaces
n Cn: Heb in its entrances
o Heb he

7-9: Then *the remnant* shall be a blessing upon those who receive them and a curse upon those who reject them (Gen.12.2-3; Gal.3.8). **10-15:** *And in that day* the LORD will abolish war in Israel (4.3), purify her worship, and punish disobedient nations. **10:** Zech.9.10. **14:** *Asherim*, pagan cult-objects (see Ex.34.13 n.).

6.1-7.7: A series of laments, threats, and denunciations, directed against all classes of Israelites, forms the third major section. As extensions of themes sounded in the first section (1.2-3.12), these oracles, if not Micah's, are consonant with his thought. **6.1-8:** The LORD has a *controversy* with his people because they have forgotten his saving acts of old and what it means *to walk*

- that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”
- 6 “With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
- 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,^p
and to walk humbly with your God?
- 9 The voice of the LORD cries to the city—
and it is sound wisdom to fear thy name:
“Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city!^q
- 10 Can I forget^r the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked,
and the scant measure that is accursed?
- 11 Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales
and with a bag of deceitful weights?
- 12 Your^s rich men are full of violence;
your^s inhabitants speak lies,
and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.
- 13 Therefore I have begun^t to smite you,
making you desolate because of your sins.
- 14 You shall eat, but not be satisfied,
and there shall be hunger in your inward parts;
you shall put away, but not save,
and what you save I will give to the sword.
- 15 You shall sow, but not reap;
you shall tread olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;
you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine.
- 16 For you have kept the statutes of Omri,^u
and all the works of the house of Ahab;
and you have walked in their counsels;
that I may make you a desolation,
and your^v inhabitants a hissing;
so you shall bear the scorn of the peoples.”^w
- 7 Woe is me! For I have become
as when the summer fruit has been gathered,
as when the vintage has been gleaned:
there is no cluster to eat,
no first-ripe fig which my soul desires.
- 2 The godly man has perished from the earth,
and there is none upright among men;
they all lie in wait for blood,
and each hunts his brother with a net.

^p Or *steadfast love*
^q Cn Compare Gk: Heb *and who has appointed it yet*
^r Cn: Heb *uncertain* ^s Heb *whose*
^t Gk Syr Vg: Heb *have made sick*
^u Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *the statutes of Omri are kept*
^v Heb *its* ^w Gk: Heb *my people*

humbly with God (Is.3.13; Hos.4.1–3; 12.2). 5: Num.22.1–6; 25.1–5; Jos.4.19–24. 8: In this single sentence the prophet sums up the legal, ethical, and spiritual requirements of religion, and sounds major notes of Amos (Am.5.24), Hosea (Hos.2.19–20; 6.6), and Isaiah (Is.7.9; 30.15). 9–16: Jerusalem, which is as wicked as was Samaria (see v. 16), must be destroyed. 7.1–7: Not only the prince and the judge, but the best and most upright of Jerusalem’s inhabitants, were corrupt, and the godly man’s enemies were his neighbors and the men of his own house. There was no basis for mutual confidence.

- ³ Their hands are upon what is evil,
to do it diligently;
the prince and the judge ask for
a bribe,
and the great man utters the evil
desire of his soul;
thus they weave it together.
- ⁴ The best of them is like a brier,
the most upright of them a thorn
hedge.
The day of their^x watchmen, of
their^x punishment, has come;
now their confusion is at hand.
- ⁵ Put no trust in a neighbor,
have no confidence in a friend;
guard the doors of your mouth
from her who lies in your bosom;
- ⁶ for the son treats the father with
contempt,
the daughter rises up against her
mother,
the daughter-in-law against her
mother-in-law;
a man's enemies are the men of
his own house.
- ⁷ But as for me, I will look to the
LORD,
I will wait for the God of my
salvation;
my God will hear me.
- ⁸ Rejoice not over me, O my enemy;
when I fall, I shall rise;
when I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be a light to me.
- ⁹ I will bear the indignation of the
LORD
because I have sinned against
him,
until he pleads my cause
and executes judgment for me.
He will bring me forth to the light;
I shall behold his deliverance.
- ¹⁰ Then my enemy will see,
and shame will cover her who said
to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will gloat over her;
- now she will be trodden down
like the mire of the streets.
- ¹¹ A day for the building of your walls!
In that day the boundary shall be
far extended.
- ¹² In that day they will come to you,
from Assyria to^y Egypt,
and from Egypt to the River,
from sea to sea and from
mountain to mountain.
- ¹³ But the earth will be desolate
because of its inhabitants,
for the fruit of their doings.
- ¹⁴ Shepherd thy people with thy staff,
the flock of thy inheritance,
who dwell alone in a forest
in the midst of a garden land;
let them feed in Bashan and Gilead
as in the days of old.
- ¹⁵ As in the days when you came out
of the land of Egypt
I will show them^z marvelous
things.
- ¹⁶ The nations shall see and be
ashamed
of all their might;
they shall lay their hands on their
mouths;
their ears shall be deaf;
they shall lick the dust like a
serpent,
like the crawling things of the
earth;
they shall come trembling out of
their strongholds,
they shall turn in dread to the
LORD our God,
and they shall fear because of thee.
- ¹⁸ Who is a God like thee, pardoning
iniquity
and passing over transgression

^x Heb *your*
^y Cn: Heb *and cities o*
^z Heb *him*

7.8-20: God will show his steadfast love to Israel, and shame will cover her enemies. This final section was probably written in the early post-exilic period; compare Ps. 137; Is. chs. 33; 40-66. 8-10: The prophet speaks as Israel. 9: Jer.10.19. 10: Ps.79.10; Jl.2.17. 11-13: Addressed to Jerusalem. 14: A prayer to God. Compare Jer.50.19. 15: The LORD speaks. 16-17: The nations

for the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger for ever
because he delights in steadfast
love.

¹⁹ He will again have compassion upon
us,
he will tread our iniquities under
foot.

Thou wilt cast all our^a sins
into the depths of the sea.

²⁰ Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob
and steadfast love to Abraham,
as thou hast sworn to our fathers
from the days of old.

^a Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *their*

will be dumb, deaf, and humbled. Israel speaks. **18-20:** Israel praises God for his forgiveness and faithfulness. **20:** Gen.12.1-3; 17.6-8; Lk.1.55.

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

As is typical of Hebrew prophecy, Nahum's words were prompted by the dramatic events of international history. The proud Assyrian empire, whose power had for centuries been felt and feared from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean, crumbled quickly after the death of Asshurbanipal (about 630 B.C.). Under the combined assaults of the vigorous Medes from north of Persia and the Chaldeans from southern Babylonia, the ancient capital city of Asshur fell in 614 B.C. When the renowned Nineveh was destroyed in 612, Assyrian domination of the Near East was ended.

The fervent reaction to the overthrow of Assyria, expressed by the peoples long subjected to its yoke, is nowhere more clearly seen than in the book of Nahum. The core of the book is a superb, vivid poem extolling Nineveh's destruction, which Nahum felt to be inevitable. The prophet spells out the reason for the Assyrian downfall in unequivocal terms: it is the LORD's judgment upon an unscrupulous, defiant nation.

This basic theme forms both the strength and weakness of Nahum's thought. It asserts boldly that the LORD is the avenger of cruelty and immorality. But it fails, perhaps only because of a resolute singleness of purpose, to indicate the consequences of this divine justice for Israel itself.

The date of Nahum's triumphal ode lies close to the event it foretells, probably between 626 and 612 B.C. Its author is identified only by his name; even the location of Elkosh (1.1) is uncertain.

AN ORACLE CONCERNING NIN'EVEH.
The book of the vision of Nahum
of Elkosh.

² The LORD is a jealous God and
avenging,
the LORD is avenging and
wrathful;
the LORD takes vengeance on his
adversaries
and keeps wrath for his enemies.

³ The LORD is slow to anger and of
great might,
and the LORD will by no means
clear the guilty.

His way is in whirlwind and storm,
and the clouds are the dust of his
feet.

⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,
he dries up all the rivers;
Bashan and Carmel wither,
the bloom of Lebanon fades.

⁵ The mountains quake before him,
the hills melt;
the earth is laid waste before him,
the world and all that dwell
therein.

⁶ Who can stand before his
indignation?
Who can endure the heat of his
anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
and the rocks are broken asunder
by him.

⁷ The LORD is good,
a stronghold in the day of trouble;
he knows those who take refuge
in him.

⁸ But with an overflowing flood
he will make a full end of his
adversaries,^a

^a Gk: Heb *her place*

1.1: Title. *Oracle*, literally "burden," is a technical term describing the prophetic word (Is.13.1; Jer.23.33-40 n.; Hab.1.1; Zech.9.1; Mal.1.1). The prophet "saw" this word (Am.1.1; Mic.1.1; Hab.1.1) as a *vision* (Ob.1). *Elkosh* may be a village in Galilee, known to Jerome as Elkesi.

1.2-11: An incomplete acrostic psalm describes the coming of the avenging and wrathful LORD, who takes vengeance on his adversaries but is a stronghold to those who take refuge in him. This fragment of a longer poem was probably inserted by an editor and now stands as an introduction to Nahum's own poem on Nineveh's fall. **2-3a:** Ex.20.5-6; 34.6-7; Dt.4.24. **3b-5:** Pss.104.3; 106.9; Is.50.2. **4:** *Bashan*, *Carmel*, and *Lebanon* were regions famous for their

- and will pursue his enemies into darkness.
- ⁹ What do you plot against the LORD?
He will make a full end;
he will not take vengeance^b
twice on his foes.^c
- ¹⁰ Like entangled thorns they are consumed,^d
like dry stubble.
- ¹¹ Did one not^e come out from you,
who plotted evil against the LORD,
and counseled villainy?
- ¹² Thus says the LORD,
"Though they be strong and many,^f
they will be cut off and pass away.
Though I have afflicted you,
I will afflict you no more.
- ¹³ And now I will break his yoke from
off you
and will burst your bonds
asunder."
- ¹⁴ The LORD has given commandment
about you:
"No more shall your name be
perpetuated;
from the house of your gods I will
cut off
the graven image and the molten
image.
I will make your grave, for you are
vile."
- ^{15g} Behold, on the mountains the feet
of him
who brings good tidings,
who proclaims peace!
Keep your feasts, O Judah,
fulfil your vows,
for never again shall the wicked
come against you,
he is utterly cut off.

- 2** The shatterer has come up against
you.
Man the ramparts;
watch the road;
gird your loins;
collect all your strength.
- ² (For the LORD is restoring the
majesty of Jacob
as the majesty of Israel,
for plunderers have stripped them
and ruined their branches.)
- ³ The shield of his mighty men is red,
his soldiers are clothed in scarlet.
The chariots flash like flame^h
when mustered in array;
the chargersⁱ prance.
- ⁴ The chariots rage in the streets,
they rush to and fro through the
squares;
they gleam like torches,
they dart like lightning.
- ⁵ The officers are summoned,
they stumble as they go,
they hasten to the wall,
the mantelet is set up.
- ⁶ The river gates are opened,
the palace is in dismay;
- ⁷ its mistress^j is stripped, she is
carried off,
her maidens lamenting,
moaning like doves,
and beating their breasts.
- ⁸ Nin'evēh is like a pool
whose waters^k run away.
"Halt! Halt!" they cry;
but none turns back.
- ⁹ Plunder the silver,

^b Gk: Heb rise up ^c Cn: Heb distress
^d Heb are consumed, drunken as with their drink

^e Cn: Heb fully ^f Heb uncertain

^g Ch 2.1 in Heb

^h Cn: The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

ⁱ Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb cypresses

^j The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

^k Cn Compare Gk: Heb from the days that she has be-
come, and they

fertility. 11: *Counseled villainy*; alternate translation, "a wicked counselor," which may refer to a specific person (the same word, "wicked," later transliterated "Belial," is used in v. 15).

1.12-3.19: The sack of Nineveh. 1.12-15: The LORD's punishment of the Assyrians and Israel's proclamation of this good news. 14: Is.14.19-21. 15: Is.40.9; 52.7; Rom.10.15. 2.1-13: The assault upon Nineveh. The plundering of its treasures and the terror of its inhabitants will come because the LORD of hosts is against that rapacious city (Is.5.26-30; Jer.5.15-17). 1: Nahum is so thoroughly convinced of the LORD's destruction of Nineveh that he can say the enemy already *has come up*. 7: *Its mistress* is either Nineveh's queen or its patron goddess

plunder the gold!
There is no end of treasure,
or wealth of every precious thing.

- ¹⁰ Desolate! Desolation and ruin!
Hearts faint and knees tremble,
anguish is on all loins,
all faces grow pale!
¹¹ Where is the lions' den,
the cave^l of the young lions,
where the lion brought his prey,
where his cubs were, with none to
disturb?
¹² The lion tore enough for his whelps
and strangled prey for his
lionesses;
he filled his caves with prey
and his dens with torn flesh.

13 Behold, I am against you, says
the LORD of hosts, and I will burn
your^m chariots in smoke, and the
sword shall devour your young lions; I
will cut off your prey from the earth,
and the voice of your messengers shall
no more be heard.

- 3** Woe to the bloody city,
all full of lies and booty—
no end to the plunder!
² The crack of whip, and rumble of
wheel,
galloping horse and bounding
chariot!
³ Horsemen charging,
flashing sword and glittering spear,
hosts of slain,
heaps of corpses,
dead bodies without end—
they stumble over the bodies!
⁴ And all for the countless harlotries
of the harlot,
graceful and of deadly charms,
who betrays nations with her
harlotries,
and peoples with her charms.

- ⁵ Behold, I am against you,
says the LORD of hosts,
and will lift up your skirts over
your face;
and I will let nations look on your
nakedness
and kingdoms on your shame.
⁶ I will throw filth at you
and treat you with contempt,
and make you a gazingstock.
⁷ And all who look on you will shrink
from you and say,
Wasted is Nin'evah; who will
bemoan her?
whence shall I seek comforters for
her?ⁿ
⁸ Are you better than Thebes^o
that sat by the Nile,
with water around her,
her rampart a sea,
and water her wall?
⁹ Ethiopia was her strength,
Egypt too, and that without limit;
Put and the Libyans were her^p
helpers.
¹⁰ Yet she was carried away,
she went into captivity;
her little ones were dashed in pieces
at the head of every street;
for her honored men lots were cast,
and all her great men were bound
in chains.
¹¹ You also will be drunken,
you will be dazed;
you will seek
a refuge from the enemy.
¹² All your fortresses are like fig trees
with first-ripe figs—
if shaken they fall
into the mouth of the eater.
¹³ Behold, your troops
are women in your midst.

^l Cn: Heb pasture ^m Heb her
ⁿ Gk: Heb you ^o Heb No-amon
^p Gk: Heb your

Ishtar. **11:** *Lion* often symbolizes the destroyer (Is.5.29; Jer.4.7; Hos.5.14; Mic.5.8). **3.1-19:** The arrogant Assyrian empire will pass away and its capital, a city of rapine and blood, will fall because the LORD is against it. **4:** The LORD condemns Nineveh for treacherous and deceitful dealings with other nations. Compare Jeremiah's indictment of Jerusalem (5.1-3,26-31) and the judgment against Babylon (Rome) in Rev.17.1-6; 18.1-24. **5-7:** Such immorality is an offense to God and man and will not go unpunished. **8:** The Egyptian capital *Thebes* (Hebrew, No-amon) had been captured by the Assyrians themselves in 663 B.C. **10:** Ps.137.8-9.

The gates of your land
are wide open to your foes;
fire has devoured your bars.

- ¹⁴ Draw water for the siege,
strengthen your forts;
go into the clay,
tread the mortar,
take hold of the brick mold!
¹⁵ There will the fire devour you,
the sword will cut you off.
It will devour you like the locust.

Multiply yourselves like the locust,
multiply like the grasshopper!

- ¹⁶ You increased your merchants
more than the stars of the
heavens.
The locust spreads its wings and
flies away.

- ¹⁷ Your princes are like grasshoppers,

your scribes^q like clouds of
locusts
settling on the fences
in a day of cold—
when the sun rises, they fly away;
no one knows where they are.

- ¹⁸ Your shepherds are asleep,
O king of Assyria;
your nobles slumber.
Your people are scattered on the
mountains

- with none to gather them.
¹⁹ There is no assuaging your hurt,
your wound is grievous.
All who hear the news of you
clap their hands over you.
For upon whom has not come
your unceasing evil?

q Or marshals

14–15: Nahum's warnings are ironical, for the fire and sword will devour Nineveh. **19:** Job 27.23; Is.37.18–20; Jer.46.11; Mt.26.52; Gal.6.7.

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

In the present book of Habakkuk at least three distinct literary forms can be recognized. The section 1.2–2.5 is constructed as a dialogue between the prophet and God; the next section (2.6–20), consisting of five woes against a wicked nation, is cast in classical prophetic style; and ch. 3 is a lengthy poem, similar in structure to the Psalms and in its final form obviously meant for liturgical use. Moreover, various historical allusions discernible in the three sections point to different periods. These materials, therefore, may not originally have been a unit. But they are connected by the common theme of theodicy (justification of the ways of God) and now appear as the word of a Hebrew prophet who lived during the height of Babylonian power, most likely in the decade 608–598 B.C.

Although a certain Habakkuk appears in the apocryphal story of Bel and the Dragon, nothing is known about the life of the Old Testament prophet, not even his father's name. His thought, however, is laid bare by the searching questions he asks.

Like Job, the prophet faces honestly the profoundly disturbing problem of why a just God is "silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he" (1.13). To this oft-recurring question Habakkuk receives an answer which is eternally valid: God is still sovereign, and in his own way and at the proper time will deal with the wicked; "but the righteous shall live by his faith" (2.4).

THE ORACLE OF God WHICH
Habak'kuk the prophet saw.

² O LORD, how long shall I cry for
help,

and thou wilt not hear?
Or cry to thee "Violence!"
and thou wilt not save?

³ Why dost thou make me see wrongs
and look upon trouble?

Destruction and violence are before
me;
strife and contention arise.

⁴ So the law is slackened
and justice never goes forth.
For the wicked surround the
righteous,
so justice goes forth perverted.

⁵ Look among the nations, and see;
wonder and be astounded.

For I am doing a work in your days

that you would not believe if told.

⁶ For lo, I am rousing the Chalde'ans,
that bitter and hasty nation,
who march through the breadth of
the earth,
to seize habitations not their own.

⁷ Dread and terrible are they;
their justice and dignity proceed
from themselves.

⁸ Their horses are swifter than
leopards,
more fierce than the evening
wolves;
their horsemen press proudly on.
Yea, their horsemen come from afar;
they fly like an eagle swift to
devour.

⁹ They all come for violence;
terror^a of them goes before them.
They gather captives like sand.

^a Cn: Heb uncertain

1.1: Title. Oracle, see Nah.1.1 n.

1.2–2.5: A dialogue in two cycles (1.2–11; 1.12–2.5), between the prophet and God, raising the question of the LORD's just government of the world. 1.2–11: The first cycle. 1.2–4: Habakkuk cries to God for help, protesting that *the wicked surround the righteous so that justice is perverted*. This section may originally have been concerned with unrighteous members of the Israelite community; in its present context it is directed against the Chaldeans (vv. 6–11, 15–17). 2: Pss.13.1–2; Jer.14.9; Rev.6.9–10. 3: Jer.20.8,10. 4: Ps.119.126; Is.59.12–14; Jer.8.8–10. 5–11: The LORD replies that the Chaldeans, wicked as they are, are the instrument of his own choosing (Is.10.5–27; 41.2–3; 42.24; 44.28; 45.1–6; Jer.5.14–19; 27.6–7; ch. 51). 5: Quoted in Acts 13.41. 6: The Chaldeans, or neo-Babylonians, ruled the ancient Near East from 612 to 539 B.C. (see Introduction to Nahum). 7–11: This tyrannical nation administers a *justice* all its own and worships its own *might*.

¹⁰ At kings they scoff,
and of rulers they make sport.
They laugh at every fortress,
for they heap up earth and take it.
¹¹ Then they sweep by like the wind
and go on,
guilty men, whose own might is
their god!

¹² Art thou not from everlasting,
O LORD my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die.
O LORD, thou hast ordained them
as a judgment;
and thou, O Rock, hast
established them for
chastisement.

¹³ Thou who art of purer eyes than to
behold evil
and canst not look on wrong,
why dost thou look on faithless men,
and art silent when the wicked
swallows up
the man more righteous than he?

¹⁴ For thou makest men like the fish of
the sea,
like crawling things that have no
ruler.

¹⁵ He brings all of them up with a
hook,
he drags them out with his net,
he gathers them in his seine;
so he rejoices and exults.

¹⁶ Therefore he sacrifices to his net
and burns incense to his seine;
for by them he lives in luxury,^b
and his food is rich.

¹⁷ Is he then to keep on emptying his
net,

and mercilessly slaying nations
for ever?

2 I will take my stand to watch,
and station myself on the tower,
and look forth to see what he will
say to me,
and what I will answer concerning
my complaint.

² And the LORD answered me:
"Write the vision;
make it plain upon tablets,
so he may read it.

³ For still the vision awaits its time;
it hastens to the end—it will not
lie.

If it seem slow, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not
delay.

⁴ Behold, he whose soul is not
upright in him shall fail,^c
but the righteous shall live by
his faith.^d

⁵ Moreover, wine is treacherous;
the arrogant man shall not abide.^e
His greed is as wide as Sheol;
like death he has never enough.
He gathers for himself all nations,
and collects as his own all
peoples."

⁶ Shall not all these take up their taunt
against him, in scoffing derision of him,
and say,

"Woe to him who heaps up what
is not his own—
for how long?—
and loads himself with pledges!"

^b Heb his portion is fat ^c Cn: Heb is puffed up
^d Or faithfulness

^e The Hebrew of these two lines is obscure

1.12–2.5: The second cycle. Habakkuk asks how long the Holy One will look on while faithless men persecute those more righteous than they; he then takes his stand to receive the LORD's answer. **12:** *Rock*, a metaphor frequently applied to God (Dt.32.4,18,30,31; 2 Sam.23.3; Pss.18.2,31; 92.15; 95.1; Is.30.29; and elsewhere). **13:** Pss.5.4–5; 49; 73. **14:** Jer.16.16; Ezek.32.3. **2.1:** The "watchtower" indicates both the prophet's eager desire for, and confidence in, the LORD's reply (Pss.5.3; 130.5–6; Is.21.8; Hos.9.8). **2.2–5:** The LORD responds with the assurance that although the prophet may not see its final issue, the divine justice is inexorable and will come in due time; in the meanwhile the *righteous* man must *live* faithfully. **2:** The LORD's answer is to be as *plain* as a highway sign (Is.8.1; Rev.1.19). **3:** Num.23.19; Dan.8.19; 2 Pet.3.8–10; Heb.10.37. **4:** The heart of the matter is that the *righteous* man who is faithful to God and his word *shall live* and the *unrighteous shall fail*. Here the contrast is primarily between Israelites and Chaldeans; but the verse has, properly, received wider application (Rom.1.17; Gal.3.11; Heb.10.38–39).

2.6–20: The five woes. These are directed against a nation that plunders *peoples*, obtains

- ⁷ Will not your debtors suddenly arise,
and those awake who will make you tremble?
Then you will be booty for them.
- ⁸ Because you have plundered many nations,
all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you,
for the blood of men and violence to the earth,
to cities and all who dwell therein.
- ⁹ Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house,
to set his nest on high,
to be safe from the reach of harm!
- ¹⁰ You have devised shame to your house
by cutting off many peoples;
you have forfeited your life.
- ¹¹ For the stone will cry out from the wall,
and the beam from the woodwork respond.
- ¹² Woe to him who builds a town with blood,
and founds a city on iniquity!
- ¹³ Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts
that peoples labor only for fire,
and nations weary themselves for nought?
- ¹⁴ For the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁵ Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink
of the cup of his wrath,^f and
makes them drunk,
to gaze on their shame!
- ¹⁶ You will be sated with contempt instead of glory.
Drink, yourself, and stagger!^g
The cup in the LORD's right hand
will come around to you,
and shame will come upon your glory!
- ¹⁷ The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you;
the destruction of the beasts will terrify you,^h
for the blood of men and violence to the earth,
to cities and all who dwell therein.
- ¹⁸ What profit is an idol
when its maker has shaped it,
a metal image, a teacher of lies?
For the workman trusts in his own creation
when he makes dumb idols!
- ¹⁹ Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake;
to a dumb stone, Arise!
Can this give revelation?
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
and there is no breath at all in it.
- ²⁰ But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.
- 3** A prayer of Habak'kuk the prophet, according to Shigion'oth.
- ² O LORD, I have heard the report of thee,
and thy work, O LORD, do I fear.
In the midst of the years renew it;
in the midst of the years make it known;
in wrath remember mercy.
- ³ God came from Teman,

^f Cn: Heb *joining to your wrath*^g Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb *be uncircumcised*^h Gk Syr: Heb *them*

gain by violence, builds towns with blood, shamelessly degrades its neighbors, and trusts in idols. Applied originally to the Assyrians, Babylonians, or Macedonians, they have universal reference, indicting all human tyranny. 14: Is.11.9. 20: Ps.11.4; Zeph.1.7; Zech.2.13.

3.1-19: Habakkuk's prayer. This is really a hymn, extolling the marching forth of the LORD in victory for the *salvation of his people*. This magnificent poem exhibits the characteristics of a psalm, including liturgical directions, and was probably added later, possibly from the circles of cultic prophecy (see Introduction to Joel). *Shigionoth*, *Selah*, and *choirmaster* are technical

- and the Holy One from Mount Paran.
His glory covered the heavens,
and the earth was full of his praise.
Selah
- ⁴ His brightness was like the light,
rays flashed from his hand;
and there he veiled his power.
- ⁵ Before him went pestilence,
and plague followed close behind.
- ⁶ He stood and measured the earth;
he looked and shook the nations;
then the eternal mountains were scattered,
the everlasting hills sank low.
His ways were as of old.
- ⁷ I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
the curtains of the land of Mid'ian did tremble.
- ⁸ Was thy wrath against the rivers, O LORD?
Was thy anger against the rivers,
or thy indignation against the sea,
when thou didst ride upon thy horses,
upon thy chariot of victory?
- ⁹ Thou didst strip the sheath from thy bow,
and put the arrows to the string.^{*i*}
Selah
Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.
- ¹⁰ The mountains saw thee, and writhed;
the raging waters swept on;
the deep gave forth its voice,
it lifted its hands on high.
- ¹¹ The sun and moon stood still in their habitation^{*j*}
at the light of thine arrows as they sped,
at the flash of thy glittering spear.
- ¹² Thou didst stride the earth in fury,
thou didst trample the nations in anger.
- ¹³ Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people,
for the salvation of thy anointed.
Thou didst crush the head of the wicked,^{*k*}
laying him bare from thigh to neck.^{*l*} *Selah*
- ¹⁴ Thou didst pierce with thy^{*m*} shafts the head of his warriors,^{*n*}
who came like a whirlwind to scatter me,
rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.
- ¹⁵ Thou didst trample the sea with thy horses,
the surging of mighty waters.
- ¹⁶ I hear, and my body trembles,
my lips quiver at the sound;
rotteness enters into my bones,
my steps totter^{*o*} beneath me.
I will quietly wait for the day of trouble
to come upon people who invade us.
- ¹⁷ Though the fig tree do not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
- ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
- ¹⁹ GOD, the Lord, is my strength;
he makes my feet like hinds' feet,
he makes me tread upon my high places.
- To the choirmaster: with stringed^{*p*} instruments.

i Cn: Heb obscure
j Heb uncertain
k Cn: Heb head from the house of the wicked
l Heb obscure
m Heb his
n Vg Compare Gk Syr: Heb uncertain
o Cn Compare Gk: Heb I tremble because
p Heb my stringed

terms in the Psalter (Pss. 7, title; 4, title). 3,7: God appears from the region of Sinai and marches toward Edom, as at the Exodus (Dt.33.2; Jg.5.4). 8b: Dt.33.26. 13: Anointed indicates either the king or the nation. 18: The psalm reaches its height by rejoicing in the LORD as the saving God (Pss.25.5; 27.1; 68.19-20).

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

The superscription to Zephaniah's book traces his ancestry back to Hezekiah and dates his ministry in the reign of Josiah (640–609 B.C.). Since the name Hezekiah is uncommon in the Old Testament, here it presumably refers to the famous Judean king (715–687 B.C.), who was favorably influenced by the preaching of Isaiah and Micah. Zephaniah's intimate knowledge of Jerusalem and its court circles, his failure to denounce the king personally, and the absence of any concern with the poor of the land support the inference that he was of royal descent.

His condemnation of the corrupt practices and religious perversions (1.4–6,8,9,12; 3.1–3,7), officially legislated against by Deuteronomy, indicates that Zephaniah prophesied before Josiah's reforms of 621 B.C. (2 Kg. ch. 23). The allusion to imminent threat from the north (see 1.10 n.), perhaps the barbaric Scythian hordes, further suggests the decade about 630 for Zephaniah's public ministry.

The book can be divided into three sections, coinciding with its three chapters. Chapter 1 proclaims doom on Judah for its religious syncretism, in the form of the destructive day of the LORD, which is "near and hastening fast." Chapter 2 extends the divine judgment to other nations (especially Israel's ancient enemies), which are also guilty; however, a humble seeking after righteousness may mitigate the wrath of that day. Chapter 3 promises comfort and consolation to those who wait patiently for the LORD and "serve him with one accord." The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall rejoice that the LORD their King is in their midst to save them and gather them home (3.20).

THE WORD OF THE LORD WHICH came to Zephani'ah the son of Cushi, son of Gedali'ah, son of Amari'ah, son of Hezeki'ah, in the days of Josi'ah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

² "I will utterly sweep away everything
from the face of the earth," says
the LORD.

³ "I will sweep away man and beast;
I will sweep away the birds of the
air
and the fish of the sea.
I will overthrow^a the wicked;
I will cut off mankind
from the face of the earth," says
the LORD.

⁴ "I will stretch out my hand against
Judah,

and against all the inhabitants of
Jerusalem;

and I will cut off from this place the
remnant of Ba'al
and the name of the idolatrous
priests;^b

⁵ those who bow down on the
roofs
to the host of the heavens;
those who bow down and swear to
the LORD
and yet swear by Milcom;

⁶ those who have turned back from
following the LORD,
who do not seek the LORD or
inquire of him."

⁷ Be silent before the Lord God!

^a Cn: Heb *the stumbling blocks*

^b Compare Gk: Heb *idolatrous priests with the priests*

1.1: **Superscription:** *The word of the LORD*, see Hos.1.1 n. Three others in the Old Testament are named Zephaniah (2 Kg.25.18; 1 Chr.6.36; Zech.6.10,14). Elsewhere *Cushi* means "Ethiopian" or "Cushite."

1.2–6: **The threat of universal destruction** caused by Judah's religious syncretism. Zephaniah vigorously condemns the adulteration of the pure worship of the LORD with elements of Canaanite (*Baal*), Ammonite (*Milcom*), and Assyrian (*host of the heavens*) religions. 2–3: *Man, mankind, and earth* are alliterative in Hebrew, as in Gen. ch. 2 (see Gen.2.7 n.), suggesting the negation of creation. *Says the LORD*, see Am.1.3 n.

1.7–9: **Court officials and royal family will be punished on the day of the LORD's sacrifice.** 7: Hab.2.20; Zech.2.13. 9: *Leaps*, see 2.4 and 1 Sam.5.5 n.

- For the day of the LORD is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.
8 And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice—
"I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.
9 On that day I will punish every one who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud."
10 "On that day," says the LORD, "a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate, a wail from the Second Quarter, a loud crash from the hills.
11 Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar! For all the traders are no more; all who weigh out silver are cut off.
12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are thickening upon their lees, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.'
13 Their goods shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them."
14 The great day of the LORD is near,

- near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter,
the mighty man cries aloud there.
15 A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.
17 I will bring distress on men, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.
18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the LORD.
In the fire of his jealous wrath, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full, yea, sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.
2 Come together and hold assembly, O shameless nation,
2 before you are driven away like the drifting chaff,^c before there comes upon you the fierce anger of the LORD, before there comes upon you

^c Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb *before a decree is born; like chaff a day has passed away*

1.10–13: Merchants and traders will be cut off and the religiously indifferent will be desolate on that day. 10: The enemy will approach Jerusalem from the north, first through the Fish Gate (Neh.3.1–6; 12.39; compare Jer.1.13–16). 11: *Traders*, literally, "people of Canaan." 12: *Thickening*, a figure drawn from wine-making to portray indolence.

1.14–18: The day of the LORD is at hand, a day of *wrath* and *ruin*, of *distress* and *devastation*. On this day neither *silver* nor *gold* shall deliver sinful man from the fire of the LORD's zeal. Zephaniah elaborates the preaching of Amos (Am.5.18–20; 8.9–14) that the day of the LORD will be darkness and not light, woe and not weal, upon Israel as well as the Gentiles (see also Is.13.9–16; Ezek.7.19; Jl.1.15; 2.1–2).

2.1–3: The humble of the land who seek the LORD in righteousness may be hidden from his fierce anger. 3: Is.55.6–9; Jl.2.12–14.

- the day of the wrath of the LORD.
- ³ Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land,
who do his commands;
seek righteousness, seek humility;
perhaps you may be hidden
on the day of the wrath of the LORD.
- ⁴ For Gaza shall be deserted,
and Ash'kelon shall become a desolation;
Ashdod's people shall be driven out
at noon,
and Ekron shall be uprooted.
- ⁵ Woe to you inhabitants of the seacoast,
you nation of the Cher'ethites!
The word of the LORD is against you,
O Canaan, land of the Philistines;
and I will destroy you till no inhabitant is left.
- ⁶ And you, O seacoast, shall be pastures,
meadows for shepherds
and folds for flocks.
- ⁷ The seacoast shall become the possession
of the remnant of the house of Judah,
on which they shall pasture,
and in the houses of Ash'kelon
they shall lie down at evening.
For the LORD their God will be mindful of them
and restore their fortunes.
- ⁸ "I have heard the taunts of Moab
and the revilings of the Ammonites,
how they have taunted my people
and made boasts against their territory.
- ⁹ Therefore, as I live," says the LORD
of hosts,
the God of Israel,
"Moab shall become like Sodom,
and the Ammonites like Gomor'rah,
a land possessed by nettles and salt pits,
and a waste for ever.
The remnant of my people shall plunder them,
and the survivors of my nation shall possess them."
- ¹⁰ This shall be their lot in return for their pride,
because they scoffed and boasted
against the people of the LORD of hosts.
- ¹¹ The LORD will be terrible against them;
yea, he will famish all the gods of the earth,
and to him shall bow down,
each in its place,
all the lands of the nations.
- ¹² You also, O Ethiopians,
shall be slain by my sword.
- ¹³ And he will stretch out his hand
against the north,
and destroy Assyria;
and he will make Nin'veh a desolation,
a dry waste like the desert.
- ¹⁴ Herds shall lie down in the midst of her,
all the beasts of the field;^d
the vulture^e and the hedgehog
shall lodge in her capitals;
the owl^f shall hoot in the window,
the raven^g croak on the threshold;
for her cedar work will be laid bare.
- ¹⁵ This is the exultant city
that dwelt secure,
that said to herself,
"I am and there is none else."
What a desolation she has become,

^d Tg Compare Gk: Heb *nation*

^e The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^f Ca: Heb *a voice* ^g Gk Vg: Heb *desolation*

2.4-15: Against the nations. 4-7: The Philistines shall be desolated because *the word of the LORD* is against them (see Jl.3.4-8). 8-11: The Moabites and Ammonites shall be annihilated, becoming *like Sodom and Gomorrah*, because they scoffed and boasted against the LORD's people (Is. chs. 15-16; 25.10-12; Jer.48.1-49.6; Ezek 25.8-11; Am.1.13-2.3). 9: Gen.19.24-28,30-38. 12-15: The Ethiopians shall be slain, and the Assyrians humiliated because of their arrogance (Is.10.5-34). 12: Is. ch. 18. 14: The Hebrew text is uncertain. 15: See Nah.3.4 n.

a lair for wild beasts!
Every one who passes by her
hisses and shakes his fist.

3 Woe to her that is rebellious and
defiled,
the oppressing city!

² She listens to no voice,
she accepts no correction.
She does not trust in the LORD,
she does not draw near to her
God.

³ Her officials within her
are roaring lions;
her judges are evening wolves
that leave nothing till the morning.

⁴ Her prophets are wanton,
faithless men;
her priests profane what is sacred,
they do violence to the law.

⁵ The LORD within her is righteous,
he does no wrong;
every morning he shows forth his
justice,
each dawn he does not fail;
but the unjust knows no shame.

⁶ "I have cut off nations;
their battlements are in ruins;
I have laid waste their streets
so that none walks in them;
their cities have been made desolate,
without a man, without an
inhabitant.

⁷ I said, 'Surely she will fear me,
she will accept correction;
she will not lose sight^a
of all that I have enjoined upon
her.'
But all the more they were eager
to make all their deeds corrupt."

⁸ "Therefore wait for me," says the
LORD,
"for the day when I arise as a
witness.

For my decision is to gather nations,
to assemble kingdoms,
to pour out upon them my
indignation,
all the heat of my anger;
for in the fire of my jealous wrath
all the earth shall be consumed.

⁹ "Yea, at that time I will change the
speech of the peoples
to a pure speech,
that all of them may call on the name
of the LORD
and serve him with one accord.

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
my suppliants, the daughter of
my dispersed ones,
shall bring my offering.

¹¹ "On that day you shall not be put to
shame
because of the deeds by which
you have rebelled against me;
for then I will remove from your
midst
your proudly exultant ones,
and you shall no longer be haughty
in my holy mountain.

¹² For I will leave in the midst of you
a people humble and lowly.
They shall seek refuge in the name
of the LORD,

¹³ those who are left in Israel;
they shall do no wrong
and utter no lies,
nor shall there be found in their
mouth
a deceitful tongue.
For they shall pasture and lie down,
and none shall make them
afraid."

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

^a Gk Syr: Heb and her dwelling will not be cut off

3.1-7: Woe to Jerusalem, because her *officials, judges, prophets, and priests are corrupt* and do not fear the *righteous LORD* who is in their midst.

3.8-13: On that day the nations will be converted and a righteous remnant will be left in Israel. **9:** The gift of a *pure speech* symbolizes forgiveness (Is.6.5-7), removes the curse of Babel (Gen.11.1-9), and anticipates Pentecost (Acts 2.1-11). **13:** Ezek.34.13-16; Zech.8.3,16.

3.14-20: The glorious gospel of salvation, promising the joy of restoration to Jerusalem. This

- ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
 he has cast out your enemies.
 The King of Israel, the LORD, is
 in your midst;
 you shall fear evil no more.
- ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to
 Jerusalem:
 "Do not fear, O Zion;
 let not your hands grow weak.
- ¹⁷ The LORD, your God, is in your
 midst,
 a warrior who gives victory;
 he will rejoice over you with
 gladness,
 he will renew youⁱ in his love;
 he will exult over you with loud
 singing
- ¹⁸ as on a day of festival.^j
 "I will remove disaster^k from you,

- so that you will not bear reproach
 for it.
- ¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal
 with all your oppressors.
 And I will save the lame
 and gather the outcast,
 and I will change their shame into
 praise
 and renown in all the earth.
- ²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
 at the time when I gather you
 together;
 yea, I will make you renowned and
 praised
 among all the peoples of the earth,
 when I restore your fortunes
 before your eyes," says the LORD.

ⁱ Gk Syr: Heb *he will be silent*

^j Gk Syr: Heb *obscure*

^k Cn: Heb *they were*

passage is generally held to be a later addition. **14–15:** These verses have the form of a psalm of the enthronement of the LORD (compare Pss. 47; 97). **14:** Zech.9.9. **15:** Is.12.6; 40.2; 41.10. **17:** Ex.15.3; Is.12.2; 62.5. **19–20:** The major elements of post-exilic eschatology are found here: destruction of the enemy (Ob.15,16; Mic.5.9; Zech.12.9), ingathering of the exiles (Mic.4.6–7; Zech.10.8–12), and return to the Holy Land (Is.62.1–5; Zech.8.7–8). By making Israel *renowned* (literally "a name") and *praised among all the peoples of the earth* the LORD fulfils his promise to the patriarchs (Gen.12.2–3).

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

When Cyrus conquered Babylon, he not only published a decree (538 B.C.) allowing the captive Jews to return to Palestine but also encouraged them to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1.1-4). It is possible that under Sheshbazzar's leadership rebuilding was immediately attempted. By 520 B.C., however, no significant progress was evident. A successful effort was then begun, and the new temple was completed in the spring of 515 B.C.

Assisted by Zechariah (see Introduction to Zechariah), the man principally responsible for this major accomplishment was the prophet Haggai. In five addresses, dating from the sixth through the ninth months of 520 B.C., he exhorted Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, the joint leaders of the Judean community, to assume official leadership in the reconstruction of the temple, and urged the priests to purify the cultic worship. These twin projects were, first of all, urgent practical steps toward unifying the disrupted religious life of the community. But Haggai saw them also as necessary preparations for the messianic age; upon the completion of these enterprises the wonderful era foreseen by earlier prophets would come, for God would bless his people with fruitfulness and prosperity, overthrow the Gentiles, and establish Zerubbabel as the messianic king on the throne of David.

IN THE SECOND YEAR OF DARIUS THE king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerub'-babel the son of She-al'ti-el, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehoz'adak, the high priest, ² "Thus says the LORD of hosts: This people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD." ³ Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, ⁴ "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? ⁵ Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. ⁶ You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes.

⁷ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. ⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may appear in my

glory, says the LORD. ⁹ You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while you busy yourselves each with his own house. ¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹ And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hills, upon the grain, the new wine, the oil, upon what the ground brings forth, upon men and cattle, and upon all their labors."

¹² Then Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Joshua the son of Jehoz'adak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared before the LORD. ¹³ Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, "I am with you, says the LORD." ¹⁴ And the LORD stirred

1.1-15a: Because the people have neglected the temple, God has punished them. **1:** Darius was king of the Persian empire from 521 to 485 B.C. The sixth month of his second year, mid-August to mid-September 520 B.C. Haggai means "festal." Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiachin (2 Kg.24.8-17), was a royal descent from David; as the Persian-appointed governor of Judah, he shared authority with Joshua, the high priest, who also had come from Babylon. **4:** The temple had been plundered and burned in 587 B.C. (2 Kg.25.8-17). **5-11:** The poor conditions in Judah were God's punishment for the neglect of his house. **13:** The messenger

up the spirit of Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehoz'-adak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, ¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month.

Q In the second year of Darius the king, ¹ in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, ² "Speak now to Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehoz'-adak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, ³ 'Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?"

⁴ Yet now take courage, O Zerub'-babel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehoz'-adak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, ⁵ according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit abides among you; fear not. ⁶ For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; ⁷ and I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts.

⁸ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. ⁹ The latter splendor of this house shall be

greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.'"

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, ¹¹ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests to decide this question, ¹² 'If one carries holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and touches with his skirt bread, or potage, or wine, or oil, or any kind of food, does it become holy?'" The priests answered, "No." ¹³ Then said Haggai, "If one who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?" The priests answered, "It does become unclean." ¹⁴ Then Haggai said, "So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, says the LORD; and so with every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean. ¹⁵ Pray now, consider what will come to pass from this day onward. Before a stone was placed upon a stone in the temple of the LORD, ¹⁶ how did you fare?" When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the winevat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. ¹⁷ I smote you and all the products of your toil with blight and mildew and hail; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD. ¹⁸ Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider: ¹⁹ Is the seed yet in

a Gk: Heb since they were

of the LORD, see Mal.3.1. **15a:** It is best to regard this as the date for the oracle in 2.15-19, which originally may have stood at this point.

1.15b-2.9: The new temple to be more splendid than the old. **2.1:** The seventh month, mid-September to mid-October. **3:** A few of the people then present may have seen Solomon's temple before its destruction. **5:** Haggai sees God's Spirit standing in Israel's midst and is reminded of the Exodus (Ex.13.21-22; 14.19-20). **6:** Referred to and partially quoted in Heb.12.26.

2.10-14: The offering made by a defiled people is unclean. **10:** The ninth month, mid-November to mid-December. **14:** The people condemned here may be the Samaritans, who opposed the work of the post-exilic community (Ezra 4.1-5; Neh.4.7-8).

2.15-19: When the foundation of the temple is laid, God will bless his people. This section may have stood after 1.1-14. The twenty-fourth day (v. 18; see 1.15a n.) probably marks the laying of the foundation stone. **18:** Ninth is probably either an error for "sixth" or a gloss. **19:** Compare Ps. 128.

the barn? Do the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree still yield nothing? From this day on I will bless you.”

20 The word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, ²¹ “Speak to Zerub’babel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, ²² and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I am about to de-

stroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders; and the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his fellow. ²³ On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerub’babel my servant, the son of She-al’ti-el, says the LORD, and make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts.”

2.20-23: When the LORD establishes the kingdom, Zerubbabel will be his messiah. 21: Compare 2.6; Jl.3.16. **22:** Ex.15.1. **23:** Compare Is.42.1; 43.10; Jer.22.24; Zech.3.8; 6.12-13.

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

Zechariah, whose prophecies date from 520 to 518 B.C. and are found in chapters 1–8, was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5.1; 6.14) and shared his zeal for a rebuilt temple, a purified community, and the coming of the messianic age (see Introduction to Haggai). Like Haggai also, Zechariah forms a link between earlier prophecy (especially Ezekiel) and mature apocalyptic (Dan. chs. 7–12). But Zechariah differs from his contemporary in the form and presentation of his message, employing the literary style of night visions and dialogues between God, seer, and interpreting angel. With him, therefore, both the form and imagery of Jewish apocalyptic thought are developed into major proportions.

Chapters 9–14, which nowhere claim to be from Zechariah, portray nothing of the early Persian period but speak rather of the Greeks (9.13). Instead of Joshua and Zerubbabel, unnamed shepherds lead the community. Instead of peace and rebuilding, there are expectations of universal warfare and the siege of Jerusalem. Style, vocabulary, and theological ideas differentiate these chapters from Zechariah's work. Though they may contain some pre-exilic bits, they were written during the Greek period, principally in the fourth and third centuries B.C., by unknown authors. Since the eschatological and messianic themes found in the first section are here further elaborated, the authors are spiritual disciples of Zechariah. The pictures of the messianic Prince of Peace and the Good Shepherd smitten for the flock remarkably foreshadow the New Testament delineation of Christ.

IN THE EIGHTH MONTH, IN THE SECOND year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechari'ah the son of Berechi'ah, son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, ² "The LORD was very angry with your fathers. ³ Therefore say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts: Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. ⁴ Be not like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.' But they did not hear or heed me, says the LORD. ⁵ Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? ⁶ But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So they repented and

said, As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us."

⁷ On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechari'ah the son of Berechi'ah, son of Iddo, the prophet; and Zechari'ah said, ⁸ "I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding upon a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen; and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. ⁹ Then I said, 'What are these, my lord?' The angel who talked with me said to me, 'I will show you what they are.' ¹⁰ So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, 'These are they whom the LORD has sent to patrol the

1.1–6: Introduction: a call to repentance. **1:** Mid-October to mid-November 520 B.C. *Zechariah*, meaning "The LORD is renowned," was the son of the priest *Iddo* (Ezra 5.1; 6.14; Neh. 12.16). The presence of the phrase *the son of Berechiah* is due probably to a scribal confusion with the son of Jeberechiah in Is. 8.2, with whom Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (2 Chr. 24.20–22) is also confused in Mt. 23.35. Zechariah had prophetic and priestly interests (see Introduction to Joel). **4:** The *prophets* had continually invited repentance (Is. 1.16–20; 30.15; 55.6–9; Jer. 3.12, 22; 4.3–4; Hos. 10.12; 14.1–7; Am. 5.4, 6, 14). **6b:** *So they repented* . . . , perhaps an editorial addition (contrast 7.11).

1.7–6.15: The word of the LORD to Zechariah in a series of eight visions. **1.7:** Mid-January to mid-February, 519 B.C.

1.8–17: The first vision: divine horsemen patrolling the earth. **9:** *My lord*, i.e., *the angel*. **10:** Job 1.6–7; 2.1–2. **11:** *Remains at rest*, the catastrophic Day of Judgment has not yet ap-

earth.' ¹¹ And they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, 'We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.' ¹² Then the angel of the LORD said, 'O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these seventy years?' ¹³ And the LORD answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. ¹⁴ So the angel who talked with me said to me, 'Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. ¹⁵ And I am very angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little they furthered the disaster. ¹⁶ Therefore, thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. ¹⁷ Cry again, Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.'"

¹⁸ And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns! ¹⁹ And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." ²⁰ Then the LORD showed me four smiths. ²¹ And I said, "What are these coming to do?" He answered, "These are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man raised his head; and these have come to terrify them, to cast

down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it."

² And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand! ² Then I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its breadth and what is its length." ³ And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him, ⁴ and said to him, "Run, say to that young man, 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of men and cattle in it. ⁵ For I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the LORD, and I will be the glory within her.'"

⁶ Ho! ho! Flee from the land of the north, says the LORD; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, says the LORD. ⁷ Ho! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. ⁸ For thus said the LORD of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye: ⁹ "Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me. ¹⁰ Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the LORD. ¹¹ And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the LORD

a Ch 2.1 in Heb *b* Ch 2.5 in Heb

peared (Hag.2.6). **12:** The *seventy years* refer to the period from 587 to 519 B.C. (Jer.25.11; 29.10). **15:** Ps.123.4; Am.6.1. **17:** 8.3; Is.44.26; 51.3; 54.8-10; Jer.31.38-39.

1.18-21: The *second vision: four horns and four smiths*. The *four horns* symbolize the powerful nations of the world (compare Ps.75.4,5; Dan.7.19-27) which the *smiths* (the LORD's agents of destruction) will scatter (Is.54.16-17).

2.1-5: The *third vision: a man going to measure Jerusalem*. **1:** *Measuring line*, see Ezek.40.3-4; Rev.11.1; 21.15-17. **4:** 1.17. **5:** Is.4.5; Ezek.43.4-5.

2.6-13: An *appeal to the exiles*. **6:** *Babylonia is the land of the north* (6.6,8; Jer.3.18; 46.20; compare Jer.51.45-49). **8:** *Apple of his eye* indicates special favor and affection (Dt.32.10; see Ps.17.8 n.). **10:** Is.54.1-3; 65.18-19; Zeph.3.14; Ezek.43.6-9. **11:** 8.20-23. **12:** This is the only Old Testament reference to Palestine as the *holy land*. The concept reappears in the Apocrypha (Wisdom of Solomon 12.3; 2 Macc.1.7). **13:** Hab.2.20; Zeph.1.7.

of hosts has sent me to you.¹² And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem."

13 Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

3 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.² And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"

³ Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments.

⁴ And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with rich apparel."⁵ And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the LORD was standing by.

6 And the angel of the LORD enjoined Joshua,⁷ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here."⁸ Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men of good omen: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.⁹ For behold, upon

the stone which I have set before Joshua, upon a single stone with seven facets, I will engrave its inscription, says the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day.¹⁰ In that day, says the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree."

4 And the angel who talked with me came again, and waked me, like a man that is wakened out of his sleep.² And he said to me, "What do you see?" I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps which are on the top of it."³ And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."⁴ And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"⁵ Then the angel who talked with me answered me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord."⁶ Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerub'babel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.⁷ What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerub'babel you shall become a plain; and he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"⁸ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,⁹ "The hands of Zerub'babel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you."¹⁰ For whoever has despised the day of small things

3.1-10: The fourth vision: Joshua and Satan. 1: *Joshua*, see Hag.1.1 n. In the Old Testament *Satan* (literally, "the Adversary") is not the incarnation of evil but a functionary of the heavenly court who accuses man of wrong (1 Chr.21.1; see Job 1.6-8 n.). God then acquits ("justifies") or condemns the defendant. 3-4: *Filthy garments* represent the sin of both priest and people. 5: *The clean turban* (Ex.28.4) and *garments* (Lev.8.1-9) symbolize purity, in preparation for the advent of the Messiah. 7: *Access*, to the heavenly courts; Joshua will present Jerusalem's prayers to heaven. 8: *The Branch*, a Davidic figure who is to usher in the messianic age (compare Ps.132.17; Is.4.2; 11.1; Jer.23.5; 33.15), here refers to Zerubbabel (see 6.9-15 n.). 10: Compare Mic.4.4.

4.1-14: The fifth vision: a golden lampstand and two olive trees. This vision emphasizes the important position held by Joshua and Zerubbabel (v. 14) in the restored Jewish community. 2: Contrast Ex.25.31-40. The stand with seven lamps may signify the unified community, or God's presence in the whole earth (v. 10b; compare Rev.5.6). 3,11-14: Rev.11.4. The two olive trees may provide oil for the lamps (v. 12), or merely flank them. 6-10a: Through God's

shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerub'babel.

"These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth." ¹¹ Then I said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?" ¹² And a second time I said to him, "What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the oil^c is poured out?" ¹³ He said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." ¹⁴ Then he said, "These are the two anointed who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

5 Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll! ² And he said to me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits, and its breadth ten cubits." ³ Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land; for every one who steals shall be cut off henceforth according to it, and every one who swears falsely shall be cut off henceforth according to it. ⁴ I will send it forth, says the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name; and it shall abide in his house and consume it, both timber and stones."

5 Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, "Lift your eyes, and see what this is that goes forth." ⁶ And I said, "What is it?" He said, "This is the ephah that goes forth." And he said, "This is their iniquity^d in all the land." ⁷ And behold,

the leaden cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the ephah! ⁸ And he said, "This is Wickedness." And he thrust her back into the ephah, and thrust down the leaden weight upon its mouth. ⁹ Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forward! The wind was in their wings; they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between earth and heaven. ¹⁰ Then I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they taking the ephah?" ¹¹ He said to me, "To the land of Shinar, to build a house for it; and when this is prepared, they will set the ephah down there on its base."

6 And again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of bronze. ² The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, ³ the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled gray^e horses. ⁴ Then I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵ And the angel answered me, "These are going forth to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the LORD of all the earth. ⁶ The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go toward the west country,^f and the dappled ones go toward the south country." ⁷ When the steeds came out, they were impatient to get off and patrol the earth. And he said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. ⁸ Then

^c Cn: Heb gold ^d Gk Compare Syr: Heb eye
^e Compare Gk: The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain ^f Cn: Heb after them

Spirit Zerubbabel will complete the temple. **12:** Perhaps a gloss; no pipes have been previously mentioned. **14:** *Anointed*, literally, "sons of oil," is not the usual designation for "messiah."

5.1-4: The sixth vision: a flying scroll. **1:** The scroll represents the word of God materialized (Ezek.2.9-10; Rev.10.9-11; compare Jer.36.2). **2:** A cubit, about eighteen inches. **3:** The curse is to purify both civil and cultic life (compare Dt.27.14-26).

5.5-11: The seventh vision: a woman in an ephah. Judah will be purified by sending its sin, personified as a woman in an ephah, to Babylon, where the ephah will be worshiped. **6: Ephah**, here a container with the capacity of an ephah, about six gallons. **11: Shinar**, Babylonia (Gen. 10.10; Dan.1.2). *House* here means temple. *On its base*, as though the ephah were an image.

6.1-8: The eighth vision: four chariots. Although details are not clear, this vision probably refers to the inauguration of the messianic age with its judgment upon all the earth. **8: North country**, Babylonia, see 2.6 n.

he cried to me, "Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country."

9 And the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁰ "Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobi'jah, and Jedai'ah, who have arrived from Babylon; and go the same day to the house of Josi'ah, the son of Zephani'ah. ¹¹ Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown,^g and set it upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jehoz'adak, the high priest; ¹² and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. ¹³ It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD, and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule upon his throne. And there shall be a priest by his throne, and peaceful understanding shall be between them both.'" ¹⁴ And the crown^h shall be in the temple of the LORD as a reminder to Heldai,ⁱ Tobi'jah, Jedai'ah, and Josi'ah^j the son of Zephani'ah.

15 "And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD; and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."

7 In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechari'ah in the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. ² Now the people of Bethel had sent Share'zer and Reg'em-mel'ech and their men, to entreat the favor of the LORD, ³ and to ask the priests of the house of

the LORD of hosts and the prophets, "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?" ⁴ Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me; ⁵ "Say to all the people of the land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? ⁶ And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? ⁷ When Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, with her cities round about her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited, were not these the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets?"

8 And the word of the LORD came to Zechari'ah, saying, ⁹ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother, ¹⁰ do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart." ¹¹ But they refused to hearken, and turned a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears that they might not hear. ¹² They made their hearts like adamant lest they should hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. ¹³ "As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear," says the LORD of hosts, ¹⁴ "and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the

^g Gk Mss: Heb crowns ^h Gk: Heb crowns
ⁱ With verse 10: Heb *Helem*
^j With verse 10: Heb *Hen*

6.9-15: The crowning of the messianic leader. This section abounds with difficulties. Originally it probably directed the crowning of Zerubbabel as messianic king, but was revised to refer to Joshua. **11:** Zerubbabel should be read for, or perhaps along with, *Joshua*. **12:** *Branch* is a messianic designation (see 3.8 n.; Hag.2.20-23). **15:** The new age will see the return of the exiles, conversion of the Gentiles, and completion of the temple (8.20-23; Ob.19-21; Mic.2.12; 4.1-5.6-8; Zeph.3.9-10.20; Mal.1.11).

7.1-14: An answer to an inquiry about fasting. **1:** Mid-November to mid-December 518 B.C. **5:** The temple at Jerusalem was burned in the fifth month and Gedaliah the governor was murdered in the seventh (2 Kg.25.8-9,25). *These seventy years*, see 1.12 n. **9-10:** This is the essence of prophetic moral teaching (Is.1.16-17; 55.6-9; 58.6-12; Jer.7.5-7; Am.5.14-15,21-24; Mic.6.8). **12:** Neh.9.3; Jer.5.3; 7.25-26; 11.10; Dan.9.11-14. **13:** Is.1.15; Jer.7.13-15.

land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate."

8 And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, ² "Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. ³ Thus says the LORD: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain.

⁴ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand for very age. ⁵ And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. ⁶ Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, says the LORD of hosts? ⁷ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country; ⁸ and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness."

9 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets, since the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. ¹⁰ For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for beast, neither was there any safety from the foe for him who went out or came in; for I set every man against his fellow. ¹¹ But now I will not deal with the remnant

of this people as in the former days, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. ¹³ And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong."

14 For thus says the LORD of hosts: "As I purposed to do evil to you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, ¹⁵ so again have I purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. ¹⁶ These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, ¹⁷ do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, says the LORD."

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, ¹⁹ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love truth and peace.

20 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; ²¹ the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I am going.'

8.1-23: The LORD will return to Zion and do good to Jerusalem and Judah. Ten sections introduced by the words, "Thus says the LORD of hosts" (except in v. 3 where the words "of hosts" are not present). 2: Jl.2.18 n. 3: Is.1.26; 11.9; 62.11-12; Jer.31.23. 4-5: Is.65.19-20. 7: East country and west country, i.e. from all the lands of the dispersion. 8: The covenant shall be reaffirmed (Ex.6.7; Jer.31.33). 9: Hag.1.6-11; 2.4-9,15-19. 13: Jer.29.18; Gen.12.2-3. 14-17: God still demands right living (see 7.9-10 n.; Eph.4.25-32; 1 Th.5.12-22). 18-19: These fasts commemorated the fall and humiliation of Jerusalem. In the fourth month the Babylonians breached the walls of Jerusalem, and in the tenth month they had begun the siege (2 Kg.25.1-4; Jer.39.2; 52.4-7); for the other months, see 7.5 n. 20-23: The prophecy of Zechariah ends on a note of universalism (compare Is.2.3; 45.14,24).

²² Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of the LORD. ²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' "

9

An Oracle

The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach

and will rest upon Damascus.

For to the LORD belong the cities of Aram,^k

even as all the tribes of Israel;

² Hamath also, which borders thereon, Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.

³ Tyre has built herself a rampart, and heaped up silver like dust, and gold like the dirt of the streets.

⁴ But lo, the Lord will strip her of her possessions and hurl her wealth into the sea, and she shall be devoured by fire.

⁵ Ash'kelon shall see it, and be afraid; Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish;

Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded.

The king shall perish from Gaza; Ash'kelon shall be uninhabited;

⁶ a mongrel people shall dwell in Ashdod;

and I will make an end of the pride of Philistia.

⁷ I will take away its blood from its mouth,

and its abominations from between its teeth;

it too shall be a remnant for our God;

it shall be like a clan in Judah,

and Ekron shall be like the

Jeb'usites.

⁸ Then I will encamp at my house as a guard,

so that none shall march to and fro;

no oppressor shall again overrun them,

for now I see with my own eyes.

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he,

humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass.

¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from E'phraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to

the nations;

his dominion shall be from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will set your captives free from the waterless pit.

¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;

today I declare that I will restore to you double.

¹³ For I have bent Judah as my bow;

k Cn: Heb the eye of Adam (or man)

9.1-11.17: The restoration of Israel; the day of the LORD.

9.1-8: The shattering of Israel's enemies foreshadows the messianic era (see Zeph.3.14-20 n.); here may be a reflection of Alexander the Great's conquests after 333 B.C. **1-6:** These cities of Syria (*Aram*) and *Philistia* fall within the ideal limits of the promised land (Gen.15.18-21; Ex.23.31). **7:** When converted, the Philistines will observe Jewish dietary laws (compare Gen.9.4; Lev.11.2-23; Dt.14.3-20). *Jebusites*, 2 Sam.5.6-9.

9.9-10: The Prince of Peace. **9:** Not two animals (Mt.21.5) but one (Jn.12.14-15) young animal is meant. The *triumphant* king comes as a *humble* and peaceful monarch. **10:** Pss.46.8-10; 72.8; Is.11.6-9; 57.19; Hos.2.18; Mic.4.1-4.

9.11-17: The ingathering of dispersed Israelites. **11:** *Blood of my covenant*, Ex.24.8; Mk.14.24;

I have made E'phraim its arrow.
I will brandish your sons, O Zion,
over your sons, O Greece,
and wield you like a warrior's
sword.

¹⁴ Then the LORD will appear over
them,
and his arrow go forth like
lightning;
the Lord GOD will sound the
trumpet,
and march forth in the whirlwinds
of the south.

¹⁵ The LORD of hosts will protect them,
and they shall devour and tread
down the slingers;^l
and they shall drink their blood^m
like wine,
and be full like a bowl,
drenched like the corners of the
altar.

¹⁶ On that day the LORD their God will
save them
for they are the flock of his
people;
for like the jewels of a crown
they shall shine on his land.

¹⁷ Yea, how good and how fair it shall
be!
Grain shall make the young men
flourish,
and new wine the maidens.

10 Ask rain from the LORD
in the season of the spring rain,
from the LORD who makes the storm
clouds,
who gives men showers of rain,
to every one the vegetation in the
field.

² For the teraphim utter nonsense,
and the diviners see lies;
the dreamers tell false dreams,
and give empty consolation.

Therefore the people wander like
sheep;
they are afflicted for want of a
shepherd.

³ "My anger is hot against the
shepherds,
and I will punish the leaders;"
for the LORD of hosts cares for his
flock, the house of Judah,
and will make them like his proud
steed in battle.

⁴ Out of them shall come the
cornerstone,
out of them the tent peg,
out of them the battle bow,
out of them every ruler.

⁵ Together they shall be like mighty
men in battle,
trampling the foe in the mud of
the streets;
they shall fight because the LORD is
with them,
and they shall confound the riders
on horses.

⁶ "I will strengthen the house of
Judah,
and I will save the house of
Joseph.
I will bring them back because I
have compassion on them,
and they shall be as though I had
not rejected them;
for I am the LORD their God and
I will answer them.

⁷ Then E'phraim shall become like a
mighty warrior,
and their hearts shall be glad as
with wine.
Their children shall see it and
rejoice,
their hearts shall exult in the
LORD.

^l Cn: Heb *the slingstones*

^m Gk: Heb *be turbulent*

ⁿ Or *he-goats*

Heb.9.20-22. 12: Is.40.1-2,9-10; 61.7. 13: *Judah and Ephraim*, the southern and northern
kingdoms. 17: Jer.31.12-14.

10.1-2: The LORD alone controls nature, and gives rain. 1: 14.17; Jl.2.18-27; Am.4.7-8.
2: *Teraphim*, see Ezek.21.18-24 n.

10.3-12: The LORD alone controls history, and will gather in his redeemed. 6-7: Both
Israel and Judah will be saved. 6: 8.7-8; Is.41.17-20; 54.8. 8-12: The restoration. 8: Is.43.1-7,
14-21; Jer.23.3. 10: Dt.30.1-5; Hos.11.11. 12: 14.9; Mic.4.5.

- ⁸ "I will signal for them and gather them in,
for I have redeemed them,
and they shall be as many as of old.
⁹ Though I scattered them among the nations,
yet in far countries they shall remember me,
and with their children they shall live and return.
¹⁰ I will bring them home from the land of Egypt,
and gather them from Assyria;
and I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon,
till there is no room for them.
¹¹ They shall pass through the sea of Egypt,^o
and the waves of the sea shall be smitten,
and all the depths of the Nile dried up.
The pride of Assyria shall be laid low,
and the scepter of Egypt shall depart.
¹² I will make them strong in the LORD
and they shall glory^p in his name,"
says the LORD.

- || Open your doors, O Lebanon,
that the fire may devour your cedars!
² Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,
for the glorious trees are ruined!
Wail, oaks of Bashan,
for the thick forest has been felled!
³ Hark, the wail of the shepherds,
for their glory is despoiled!
Hark, the roar of the lions,

for the jungle of the Jordan is laid waste!

4 Thus said the LORD my God: "Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. ⁵ Those who buy them slay them and go unpunished; and those who sell them say, 'Blessed be the LORD, I have become rich'; and their own shepherds have no pity on them. ⁶ For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of this land, says the LORD. Lo, I will cause men to fall each into the hand of his shepherd, and each into the hand of his king; and they shall crush the earth, and I will deliver none from their hand."

7 So I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to be slain for those who trafficked in the sheep. And I took two staffs; one I named Grace, the other I named Union. And I tended the sheep. ⁸ In one month I destroyed the three shepherds. But I became impatient with them, and they also detested me. ⁹ So I said, "I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die; what is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed; and let those that are left devour the flesh of one another."
¹⁰ And I took my staff Grace, and I broke it, annulling the covenant which I had made with all the peoples.
¹¹ So it was annulled on that day, and the traffickers in the sheep, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the LORD. ¹² Then I said to them, "If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them." And they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver. ¹³ Then the LORD said to me, "Cast it into the treasury"^q—the lordly price at which I was paid

^o Cn: Heb *distress*

^p Gk: Heb *walk*

^q Syr: Heb *to the potter*

11.1-3: **The fall of the tyrants.** *Cedars, shepherds, and lions* refer to the rulers. 1: Lebanon's cedars were proverbial symbols of strength (Ezek.31.2-9). 2: *Oaks of Bashan*, Is.2.13; Ezek.27.6; compare Ps.22.12; Am.4.1.

11.4-17: **The two shepherds.** Because they have despised him, God allows the Israelites to be abused by their rulers and breaks his covenant with them. 4-14: The prophet portrays a good shepherd rejected by his sheep. 5: *Those who buy and sell* are the Ptolemaic overlords; *their own shepherds* are native appointees. 8: *The three shepherds*, probably contemporary officials, cannot now be identified. 12-13: *Thirty shekels*, the price of a slave (Ex.21.32; com-

off by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and cast them into the treasury^q in the house of the LORD. ¹⁴ Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to me, "Take once more the implements of a worthless shepherd. ¹⁶ For lo, I am raising up in the land a shepherd who does not care for the perishing, or seek the wandering,^r or heal the maimed, or nourish the sound, but devours the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their hoofs.

¹⁷ Woe to my worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock!

May the sword smite his arm
and his right eye!

Let his arm be wholly withered,
his right eye utterly blinded!"

12

An Oracle

The word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus says the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him: ² "Lo, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the peoples round about; it will be against Judah also in the siege against Jerusalem. ³ On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it shall grievously hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will come together against it. ⁴ On that day, says the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But upon the house of Judah I will open my eyes, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. ⁵ Then the clans

of Judah shall say to themselves, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.'

⁶ "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall devour to the right and to the left all the peoples round about, while Jerusalem shall still be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem.

⁷ "And the LORD will give victory to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be exalted over that of Judah. ⁸ On that day the LORD will put a shield about the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, at their head. ⁹ And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

¹⁰ "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first-born. ¹¹ On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megid'do. ¹² The land shall mourn, each family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹³ the family of

^q Syr: Heb to the potter

^r Syr Compare Gk Vg: Heb the youth

pare Mt.26.15; 27.9). **15-17:** The prophet portrays a worthless shepherd who exploits the sheep (Ezek.34.2-10; Mic.3.1-7; Jn.10.1,8-13).

12.1-14.21: The coming great day of the LORD, when he shall cleanse Jerusalem from sin, re-establish the covenant, and reign over all the earth.

12.1-13.6: Jerusalem shall lament her sin and be purged of idolatry. **12.1:** Is.42.5. **2:** Ps.75.8; Is.51.17-23. **7-8:** The ideal king will be from the house of David. **10-14:** With the picture of Jerusalem mourning for a prophet or messiah whom it has martyred compare Is.52.13-53.12; Mt.23.37; Jn.19.34-37; Rev.1.7. **10:** Only child and first-born, see Lk.2.7; Jn.1.14,18. **11:** Hadad-rimmon, a popular fertility god whose seasonal death was widely mourned (compare Ezek.8.14; Hos.7.14). **13:** Compare Num.3.21. **13.1:** Ps.46.4; Ezek.47.1-12; Jl.3.18; Jn.4.10-

the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shim'e-ites by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹⁴ and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.

13 "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

² "And on that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more; and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit. ³ And if any one again appears as a prophet, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. ⁴ On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; he will not put on a hairy mantle in order to deceive, ⁵ but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the soil; for the land has been my possession^t since my youth.' ⁶ And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.'"

⁷ "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who stands next to me,"

says the LORD of hosts.

"Strike the shepherd, that the sheep
may be scattered;
I will turn my hand against the
little ones.

⁸ In the whole land, says the LORD,
two thirds shall be cut off and
perish,

and one third shall be left alive.

⁹ And I will put this third into the fire,
and refine them as one refines
silver,

and test them as gold is tested.

They will call on my name,
and I will answer them.

I will say, 'They are my people';
and they will say, 'The LORD is
my God.'"

14 Behold, a day of the LORD is coming, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in the midst of you. ² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. ³ Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that one half of the Mount shall withdraw northward, and the other half southward. ⁵ And the valley of my mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall touch the side of it; and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzzi'ah king of Judah. Then the LORD your^u God will come, and all the holy ones with him.^v

⁶ On that day there shall be neither cold nor frost.^w ⁷ And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the LORD), not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light.

^t Cn: Heb for man has caused me to possess

^u Heb my

^v Gk Syr Vg Tg; Heb you

^w Compare Gk Syr Vg Tg; Heb uncertain

14; 7.38; Rev.21.6; 22.1-2. **2-6:** Professional prophecy, fallen into disrepute, will cease. **2:** Hos.2.17; Zeph.1.4; 3.4. **3:** Jer.23.9-22. **4:** 2 Kg.1.8. **5:** Am.7.14. **6:** Compare 1 Kg.18.28.

13.7-9: God's shepherd, smitten for the sheep. A separate messianic oracle (Mt.26.31; Mk.14.27), closely linked with chs. 9-11. After the death of the shepherd, a remnant of his flock will be purified and saved. **7:** *Man*, compare Dan.8.16; 9.21. **8:** Is.6.13. **9:** Is.1.25; 4.3-4; 48.10; Ezek.34.11-16; Hos.2.21-23.

14.1-21: The final warfare and the final victory (Is.66.15-23; Ezek. chs. 38-39; Jl.3.9-21;

8 On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter.

9 And the LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

10 The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft upon its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Han'anel to the king's wine presses.¹¹ And it shall be inhabited, for there shall be no more curse;^x Jerusalem shall dwell in security.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will smite all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet, their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths.¹³ And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will lay hold on the hand of his fellow, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other;¹⁴ even Judah will fight against Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance.¹⁵ And a plague

like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the asses, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.

16 Then every one that survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of booths.¹⁷ And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain upon them.¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt do not go up and present themselves, then upon them shall^y come the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the feast of booths.¹⁹ This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the feast of booths.

20 And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the LORD." And the pots in the house of the LORD shall be as the bowls before the altar;²¹ and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day.

x Or ban of utter destruction
y Gk Syr: Heb shall not

Mk.13.7-27; Rev. chs. 20-22). 5: See Am.1.1 n. 6-7: Is.24.23; Rev.22.5. 8: 13.1. 9: Dt.6.4; Ps.99.1-5; Mal.1.11; Rev.11.15-18; 15.3-4. 10-11: Compare 2 Kg.23.8; Jer.31.38-40. 12-15: 14.3; Ex.7.4-5. 16: Booths, Lev.23.39-43. 17: Ex.34.21-24; Jn.7.2. 18-19: Compare Is. ch. 19; Jer. ch. 46; Ezek. chs. 29-32. 20-21: Compare Lev.27.30-33; Jl.3.17.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Nothing is known about the person of Malachi. Even his name, which means "My messenger," may be only an appellation, based on 3.1 (compare 2.7). The book, however, presents a substantial amount of information about its author's personality. Living perhaps in the period 500–450 B.C., this Jew was devoted to the temple and held a high view of the priesthood and its responsibilities. He speaks frequently of "the covenant" (2.4,5,8,10, 14; 3.1) and shows a great respect for the priestly "instruction" (2.6,7,8,9). Instead of adopting the oracular style regularly used by prophets, Malachi employs a distinctive question-and-answer method of stating his argument. Nevertheless, his emphases upon sin and judgment (2.2,9; 3.3,5) and the advent of the day of the LORD (3.1–2,17; 4.1) mark him as a prophet, and he may best be understood as a "cultic prophet" (see Introduction to Joel).

One central theme dominates Malachi's thought: fidelity to the LORD's covenant and its teachings. From this standpoint he both condemns the priests for corrupting worship and misleading the people (1.6–2.9; 3.3–4) and charges his brethren to remain faithful to their Jewish wives and thus have "godly offspring" (2.13–16). In exhorting Israel to faithfulness Malachi gives also striking descriptions of the worship of the LORD by the Gentiles (1.11,14), the ideal priest (2.5–7), and the blessing of obedience (3.10–12,16–17; 4.2–3). He asserts, further, the fatherhood of God (2.10) and adds to the concept of the day of the LORD (Zeph.1.14–18) the figure of the appointed forerunner (3.1–4; compare 4.5–6). It is fitting that these pages, which point so clearly to the New Covenant, conclude the books of the prophets and precede, in our English Bibles, the New Testament.

THE ORACLE OF THE WORD OF THE LORD to Israel by Mal'achi.^a

2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How hast thou loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob³ but I have hated Esau; I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert."⁴ If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the LORD of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down, till they are called the wicked country, the people with whom the LORD is angry for ever."⁵ Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, "Great is the LORD, beyond the border of Israel!"

6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I

am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. You say, 'How have we despised thy name?'⁷ By offering polluted food upon my altar. And you say, 'How have we polluted it?'^b By thinking that the LORD's table may be despised.⁸ When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that no evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that no evil? Present that to your governor; will he be pleased with you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts.⁹ And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts.¹⁰ Oh, that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might

a Or my messenger b Gk: Heb thee

1.1: **Superscription:** Compare Zech.9.1; 12.1. *Oracle*, see Nah.1.1 n. *The word of the LORD*, see Hos.1.1 n.

1.2–5: God loves Israel. 2: *Esau, Jacob's twin brother*, was the ancestor of the Edomites (Gen.25.24–26,30; 36.1). 2–3: Rom.9.13. 2–5: Is. ch. 34; 63.1–6; Jer.49.7–22; Ezek.25.12–14; Ob.2–3.

1.6–2.9: The priests have despised their God and their solemn vocation. 6: Ex.20.12; Pr.30.11. 8: *Blind or lame animals* were unacceptable for sacrifice (Lev.22.17–25; Dt.15.21). 10: *Shut the doors* of the temple to halt vain worship (Is.1.13; Am.5.21–24). 11: In contrast with Judah's

not kindle fire upon my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. ¹¹ For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² But you profane it when you say that the LORD's table is polluted, and the food for it^c may be despised. ¹³ 'What a weariness this is,' you say, and you sniff at me,^d says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD. ¹⁴ Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished; for I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name is feared among the nations.

2 "And now, O priests, this command is for you. ² If you will not listen, if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; indeed I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. ³ Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung upon your faces, the dung of your offerings, and I will put you out of my presence.^e ⁴ So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may hold, says the LORD of hosts. ⁵ My covenant with him was a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him, that he might fear; and he feared me, he stood in awe of my name. ⁶ True instruction^f was in his mouth,

and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. ⁷ For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction^g from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. ⁸ But you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts, ⁹ and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you have not kept my ways but have shown partiality in your instruction."

10 Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? ¹¹ Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. ¹² May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob, for the man who does this, any to witness^g or answer, or to bring an offering to the LORD of hosts!

13 And this again you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand. ¹⁴ You ask; "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ Has not the one God

^c Heb *its fruit, its food*

^d Another reading is *it*

^e Cn Compare Gk Syr: Heb *and he shall bear you to it*

^f Or *law* ^g Cn Compare Gk: Heb *arouse*

present corrupt practices, the Gentiles render a *pure offering* to the LORD (compare v. 14b; Ps.102.15; Jl.2.28; Zeph.3.9-10). **2.3:** Ex.29.14; Nah.3.6. **4:** *Levi* was the priestly tribe (Num. 3.45; 18.21-24; Dt.33.8-11). **5:** Num.25.12-13. **7:** Lev.10.11; Dt.21.5. **8-9:** Mic.3.11; Mt. 23.1-36.

2.10-16: God hates divorce and demands marital fidelity. **10:** The fatherhood and unity of God imply the brotherhood and unity of man (v. 15; compare Dt.32.6,18; Is.63.16; 64.8; Jer.31.1-3; Hos.11.1; Eph.4.6). **11:** *The daughter of a foreign god* refers to heathen women. **14-16:** Marriage is a sacred *covenant*, honorable among godly men (Gen.2.24; Ezek.16.8; Hos.2.19; Mk.10.2-9; Eph.5.21-33).

made^h and sustained for us the spirit of life?ⁱ And what does he desire? Godly offspring. So take heed to yourselves, and let none be faithless to the wife of his youth. ¹⁶ "For I hate^j divorce, says the LORD the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless."

¹⁷ You have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Every one who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

3 "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

"For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the LORD. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside

the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

⁶ "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷ From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' ⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How are we robbing thee?' In your tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me; the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer^k for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

¹³ "Your words have been stout against me, says the LORD. Yet you say, 'How have we spoken against thee?' ¹⁴ You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the good of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵ Henceforth we deem the arrogant blessed; evildoers not only prosper but when they put God to the test they escape.'"

^h Or has he not made one?

ⁱ Cn: Heb and a remnant of spirit was his

^j Cn: Heb he hates ^k Or devouring locust

2.17-3.5: The LORD will send his messenger to prepare for the coming of the day of judgment. **17:** Job 21.7-16; Hab.1.2-4,13. **3.1-4:** The messenger or angel (Gen.16.7; 22.11; Ex.3.2; Is.63.9) will prepare for the day of God's coming (Is.40.3; Mt.11.10; Mk.1.2; Lk.1.17,76; 7.27) first by purifying the priesthood. **2:** Mt.3.10-12. **5:** God himself will appear for judgment against the wicked and godless (Zeph.1.14-18; 3.1-8; Mk.13.14-37; 2 Th.2.1-12).

3.6-12: If the people will return to God with a full measure of devotion, he will bless them. **6:** Num.23.19; Heb.13.8; Jas.1.17. **8-9:** The tithes required by the law (Lev.27.30; Num.18.21-24) were being withheld; therefore the curse of crop failure resulted (v. 11). **10:** Dt.28.2-12; Ezek.34.25-31. **12:** Is.61.6-9; 62.4.

3.13-4.3: When the day of judgment comes, the true worshipers will be spared. **14:** Job 21.15; Is.58.3. **16:** A book of remembrance, compare Ex.32.32-34; Ps.69.28; Is.4.3; 65.6; Dan.7.10;

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another; the LORD heeded and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and thought on his name. ¹⁷ "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ Then once more you shall distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

4¹ "For behold, the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But for you who fear my

name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall. ³ And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

4 "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 "Behold, I will send you Eli'jah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."^m

¹ Ch 4.1-6 are Ch 3.19-24 in the Hebrew
^m Or ban of utter destruction

12.1; Rev.20.12; 21.27. **4.1:** Compare 3.2-5. **2:** *The sun of God's righteousness* symbolizes health and vindication (2 Sam.23.4; Ps.84.11; Is.60.1).

4.4-6: **Two** appendices further exhorting to obedience to the covenant *statutes and ordinances*, and identifying the forerunner with *Elijah the prophet*. **4:** *Horeb* is Mount Sinai, see Dt.5.1-3. **5:** Ec.48.10; Mt.11.13-14; 17.10-13; Mk.6.14-15. **6:** Lk.1.17.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE WITH UNDERSTANDING

THE DIVERSITY AND THE UNITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

THE BIBLE belongs to the whole world as no other book does. Parts or the whole of it are available in more than a thousand languages. Christians everywhere pay lip service to it as the supreme authority for their faith. Phrases from its pages have become current speech, and allusions to its stories are widely understood. Yet relatively few people are familiar with it as a whole, and acquaintance for the most part is limited to a small selection of passages. Much is not easy to understand, and not all is equally rewarding for all purposes. What every reader should first understand is the range and variety of the Bible, and what parts can best serve the purpose for which he turns to it.

The opening chapters of the Old Testament deal with human origins. They are not to be read as history, but neither are they to be dismissed as childish myths. They are marked by profound spiritual insight. They teach that God created man to be obedient to him, and that in that obedience man's well-being lay. By disobedience man turned from the true source of his life, so that before Adam and Eve were ejected from the Garden, he hid himself from God. These chapters think of sin not as a theological abstraction, but as something real which recoils upon man to his own hurt. It broke up the first family, brought murder and strife and corruption, and ate like a canker into the heart of man.

These chapters are followed by the stories of the patriarchs, which preserve ancient traditions now known to reflect the conditions of the times of which they tell, though they cannot be treated as strictly historical. That they contain genuine historical memories is increasingly recognized today. Yet here again, it is not for history but for religion that they are preserved, and they have much of abiding value to say to us today. Every reader should be alert to understand not merely God's dealings with the patriarchs, but what he is saying to us through these stories. To take a single illustration, the story of Abraham's narrowly averted sacrifice of Isaac is more than a memory of times when human sacrifice was common, or of the first awakening in Israel's

ancestors of the recognition that God did not desire it. It is the story of a man who loved God more than all else and who was willing to surrender to God even the son in whose life his own was bound. There are sacrifices which God does not ask; there are none a man should be unwilling to make.

With the story of the Exodus and the settlement in Canaan we come nearer to historical light, though we are still dealing with idealized history. The main purpose of this narrative is to bring the reader to realize that God chose Israel to be his people and delivered her by his power, thus revealing his own character and laying on her the constraint of obedience. God's election of Israel was to privilege indeed, but it was also to service, and the privilege was bound up with the service.

Into this story the legal sections of the Old Testament have been fitted, and especially all the provisions for the sacrificial ritual of the shrine. Much bears the marks of the social and religious background of the times from which it comes, and not a little is without authority for the Christian. He does not observe the Jewish dietary laws, and in many countries the care for the helpless and needy is no longer left to his charity but is organized by the state; and for the Christian, animal sacrifices are superseded by the sacrifice of Christ. It is to be observed, however, that while the Letter to the Hebrews links the death of Christ with the ritual of the Day of Atonement, other references in the New Testament allude rather to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. That chapter contains the most remarkable thought on sacrifice found in the Old Testament. The Servant was one who willingly gave himself to be sacrificed, a morally blameless man instead of a physically unblemished animal, and his sacrifice was wider in its efficacy than any sacrifice mentioned in the Pentateuch. It availed even for Gentiles, who in penitence confessed that the sufferings he endured should rightly have been theirs. It was because the death of Jesus picked up the meaning of sacrifice in the Old Testament at this, its highest point both in the nature and in the efficacy of the sacrifice, that,

for the Christian, ritual sacrifice was superseded in the Cross. For the Jew sacrifice ended when the Temple was destroyed, because perforce it must end. For the Christian it ended when the great concept of Isaiah 53 found its fulfilment at Calvary.

When we come to the books of Samuel and Kings we have much very good history. The unsurpassed account of the reign of David probably comes from the time of Solomon, and it is without equal as historical writing in the literature of any country of the world at so early an age. Not all in these books is of the same historical value, and especially in the stories of Elijah and Elisha there are legendary elements. There is variety of literary forms within a single book. All in these books, as also in the later books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, is concerned with the lessons of history as much as with the history itself. For here, as everywhere, the Bible is a religious book, concerned to remember the past for what it has to say to the present.

The prophetic books offer special difficulty to the modern reader. They contain utterances of the prophets to their contemporaries, often with no indication but their contents to tell us the circumstances of their delivery, and not arranged chronologically. They expose the political and social ills of Israel, the hollow religiosity and the denial of human brotherhood, the rapacity of the rich and the sexual laxity, in a way that may seem to have little relevance to our day. Yet all their oracles spring from enduring religious principles, which are valid in every generation, so that the reader here once more should seek to penetrate beneath all that belongs to the age of the prophets to that which is of abiding significance, that he may then convert it into the terms of his own life and his own day.

The prophetic oracles are mostly in poetry, but the poetic book of the Old Testament *par excellence* is the book of Psalms. Here we have poems which were created for religious use, many of them probably to accompany the ritual of sacrifice and feast, and they have continued to serve a religious use in public and in private throughout the years. There are verses which grate on our ears, and not all the psalms reach the same heights. But as a whole, they can still nourish the spirit of devotion, and can express the aspirations of our hearts as we set aside the ephemeral and allow them to serve as the vehicle of our approach to God.

Of the wisdom books of the Old Testament, two may be mentioned here. The book of Proverbs is mainly a collection of poetic observations used in the instruction of youth,

and governed throughout by the conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that the way of wisdom is the way of integrity and of obedience to his will. The book of Job carries one of the profoundest messages to be found in the Old Testament. Through its story of a godly man who suffered grievous pain and loss, and who was tormented by the friends who came to comfort him till he was goaded into an appeal both *to* God and *against* him until God answered him out of the whirlwind to remind him of the folly of passing judgment on God out of his ignorance, the author teaches that more important than the discovery of the reasons for suffering is the finding of God *in* suffering. So far from being cut off from God by his suffering, as Job's friends supposed and as Job himself feared, he comes to a new understanding of God through his suffering. His past knowledge of God was but as hearsay compared with the experience he now has, so that instead of continuing to be tormented by questions, he rests in God.

When we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we move in a different world. Yet the two Testaments are bound together in a very real way. Here in the first three Gospels we have stories of Jesus which are linked together by the use of common sources, while in the fourth Gospel we have an independent account which is more concerned to interpret the significance of our Lord. None of the Gospels offers a biography of Jesus, yet by their study we may come to know him better than others may be known from full and careful biographies. By the intimate study of the Gospels we may know much about Jesus; but better than that, we may come to know him and to be infused with something of his spirit.

History is represented in the New Testament by the book of Acts. Yet here again history is not recorded merely for its own sake. The reader is told of the spread of Christianity until in the person of Paul it is carried to Rome, though a great deal that he would like to know is left unrecorded. Yet he can see the spirit of the early church, and can understand its message. More important, he can realize that from the beginning it was perceived that the Christian faith is not something to be enjoyed alone, but to be shared. It is something that is given to the church so that it may be communicated to all men, and only in sharing it with all men is it truly possessed.

In the letters of the New Testament we have reflected some of the churches which were founded by the apostles, and — more important — we have unfolded the significance of

the Christian message. The death and resurrection of Jesus are seen not simply as facts of history, but as charged with meaning for us. When the Cross of Christ becomes the organ of our surrender by faith to him, in a profound sense we die with him and are born anew in him. His resurrection becomes the organ of our renewed life, whose essential character lies in the union of our life with him, so that he lives in us, and we are linked with his character and purpose and live no longer unto ourselves but become extensions of his personality in the world. The Son of God lifts us to become the sons of God, in whom our Father is to be seen, and heirs of God, whose heritage is to share his spirit and purpose.

The final book of the New Testament came out of a time of suffering and persecution, like the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, whose character it so much shares. Neither should be read as a cryptic plan of the ages, but as the expression of an undying hope in God and a grand faith that humble loyalty to him transmutes suffering for him into a privilege. The wise reader is less concerned with the intricate symbolism than with the spirit which penetrates it all.

That there is a place for the study of every detail of the Bible in the light of the situation out of which it arose, with all the illumination that philology and archaeology and ancient history can provide, is not for a moment here forgotten. But more important than that is the recognition that in this book are the living oracles of God, which may speak to us and nourish our spirit when we approach them in true devotion and humility. We should always remember the variety of literary forms found in the Bible, and should read a passage in the light of its own particular literary character. Legend should be read as legend, and poetry as poetry, and not with a dull prosaic and literalistic mind.

Of the great themes which run through the Bible and impart to it a unity despite its diversity the wise reader is ever aware. Throughout, God is One who reveals himself to men and who desires their fellowship. He reveals himself in history and through persons, until he finally reveals himself in One who is both God and man. In both Testaments it is the same God who is revealed, and this above all else gives unity to the Bible. At the same time it must be recognized that much in the Old Testament is superseded in the New, and there are ideas of God in the Old Testament which are not to be approved. For though both Testaments bring us revelation of God, the revelation came through men who could

not always apprehend it in its fulness. Just as light is modified by the glass through which it passes, while none derives from the glass itself, so revelation whose sole origin is in God is modified and often marred by the personalities through which it comes. That is why the perfect revelation could come only through the perfect Man, and why the incarnation was already implicit in the self-revealing purpose of God.

In both Testaments God is revealed as compassionate and saving. He had compassion on Israel in her Egyptian bondage, and on men who were in the deeper bondage of sin. It has already been said that from the earliest pages of the Bible it was perceived that fundamentally sin is disobedience to God and that by its very nature it curses man. Throughout the Bible God is concerned to save men from sin, but in the New Testament we have the supreme expression of that concern when God in Christ stooped to take upon himself the curse of sin, that by the sacrifice on the Cross deliverance might be wrought. The saving character of God was revealed in bringing Israel out of Egypt; but it was revealed on a new level at Golgotha.

Again, in both Testaments religion is seen in terms of covenant, and the covenant is the response in gratitude for the deliverance that has been accomplished. When Israel was saved from Egypt she went to the sacred mount and there pledged herself in the covenant to the God who had saved her. The deliverance was the unconstrained act of God, whose initiative in grace is the same throughout the Bible. So in the New Testament the Cross is freely accepted by him in whom the character of God is perfectly revealed, and it becomes the organ of our salvation, laying upon us its constraint to bind ourselves in the new covenant to him. In Old Testament and in New the covenant calls for obedience. It is not a bargain but a pledge. That Israel was often faithless to the covenant does not alter its essential character. Her obedience consisted in the cherishing of the revelation that had been given to her in the context of her deliverance and in reflecting the will of God in all her life. In due time she was instructed by the prophets that her faith was not for her alone. She had been chosen by God that through her he might reach all nations, and her election involved her mission. The new covenant in Christ calls for the cherishing of the larger revelation of God given to us in the life and death and resurrection of Christ, and in obedience to his divine will.

Yet another theme which runs through the

Bible and belongs to its unity is faith. Faith is something more than a belief about God. When the Israelites stepped on to the sand left by the receding Red Sea, they showed more than a belief about God. And Christian faith is more than an intellectual persuasion. It is the abandonment of ourselves to Christ, something that carries us into him, so that henceforth we live in him and he in us, as the vine and the branch live in each other indissolubly.

In both Testaments the theme of judgment figures. When Adam sinned and isolated himself from God, his self-judgment led to the judgment of exclusion from the Garden. And continually in the Old Testament we find the same thing. The prophets announced the coming judgment when Israel by her disobedience cut herself off from God. All judgment begins in self-judgment. So, too, in the New Testament: "He who does not believe is condemned already" (Jn.3.18). This is the reverse side of the teaching that man's well-being consists in walking in obedience to God. When he does not obey God he walks to disaster, because without God his wisdom is but folly. Yet the judgment of God is ever tempered with mercy. His mercy is shown in his patience and in sending his servants the prophets to warn and to reclaim. It is shown, too, in the sparing of the remnant. Sometimes it is a righteous remnant, spared for its own loyalty, and sometimes it is a remnant spared to preserve for a generation, whose response shall be wiser than its own, the reve-

lation it so lightly regards. From the earliest pages of the Bible the thought of the remnant appears. Noah and his family are a remnant spared at the flood, and throughout the prophetic words of judgment there appear promises of the remnant that shall remain—the remnant to whom alone the heritage of the covenant belongs, and through whom it is to be shared with those who do not belong to Israel according to the flesh. And in the New Testament the Church consists first of a remnant of Israel. The first disciples were all Jews, who inherited the revelation of the Old Covenant and also the new revelation from the same God given in Christ, and who brought the response of faith and obedience, and then shared their heritage with Gentiles who brought the same response.

A rich diversity of types of literature marks the Bible. There is progress in revelation; part of the Old Testament was outgrown before the Old Testament was itself complete, and more was superseded in the New Testament. Yet amid the diversity runs a unity, and in all the progress there is the thread of a true continuity which derives from the God who speaks through it all. The end of true study of the Bible is to hear his voice, and all who have ears to hear may hear it. The wise student of the Bible will welcome every aid to understand its background and meaning, but his supreme need is one no other can supply. It is the humble desire to find God in his word, and to hear his word that it may find response in gratitude and obedience.

SURVEY OF THE GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BIBLE LANDS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. THE LANDS
Lands of the Near East, § 1
The land of Canaan, § 2</p> <p>2. THE PEOPLE
Anthropological data, § 3
Canaanite city-states, § 4
The archaeology of Canaan, § 5</p> <p>3. THE PEOPLE OF THE COVENANT
The Patriarchs, § 6
The days of Moses, § 7
The conquest of Canaan, § 8</p> | <p>4. THE HEBREW KINGDOMS
Rise of the monarchy, § 9
David and Solomon, § 10
The divided monarchy: Judah and Israel, §§ 11-12</p> <p>5. POST-EXILIC PALESTINE
The remnant that returned, § 13
The invasion of Hellenism, §§ 14-15
Rome's order, §§ 16-17</p> |
|--|---|
-

1. THE LANDS

§ 1 *Lands of the Near East.* Seen from the tower of the Russian monastery on the Mount of Olives, Palestine looks like a gable roof pitching eastward and westward. The north-south road, which from the days of old has linked together the highland towns and villages, runs straight along the roof top. To the east barren hills slope down gently at first, and soon precipitously, toward the deep rift of the Jordan valley and of the Dead Sea, the northeastern shore of which is in full sight. The eastern sky line is formed by the Transjordan ridge, which marks the limit of the Syrian desert. On the western horizon the Mediterranean Sea and the coastal plain are visible in the distant haze, while the western slopes of the highlands, past Jerusalem and its suburbs, remain partly hidden, owing to the steep descent.

Toward the south the barren expanses and parched hills of the Negeb isolate Palestine from the countries adjoining the Red Sea: Arabia, the Sinai peninsula wedged between the Gulf of 'Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez, and the lands of the Nile, accessible by way

of the isthmus which bridges Asia and Africa. The Negeb thus had economic and strategic importance, for it was the gateway to the Middle East by sea or overland route, as well as Egypt's Asiatic frontier, where the soldiers of Pharaoh guarded the approach to the kingdom.

The topography north of the Syrian border somewhat resembles the Palestinian relief with its successive zones running parallel to the shore line. The Syrian system, however, has a different geological origin. The plain along the shore is reduced to a narrow strip interrupted by rocky spurs projecting from the mountainside. The Lebanon range rises abruptly from the seaboard, culminating at 10,131 feet. Passes are few and high. North of Lebanon the coastal range is noticeably lower. The Orontes and the Litani, flowing respectively northward and southward, drain the depression of the Beqa'a, which is the plain or valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon mountains and which leads into the Jordan rift. In their lower course, the Orontes and the Litani turn westward at

a sharp angle, dramatically breaking through the barrier of the mountains. East of the Beqa'a, Mount Hermon and the Anti-Lebanon range reach altitudes of respectively 9,232 and 8,625 feet, contrasting with the smaller hills fanning out farther to the north-east. Mountain streams flowing eastward (for example the Pharpar and Abana) irrigate the gardens of Damascus and of the villages which line the northwestern reaches of the Syrian desert.

The arc-shaped ranges of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus, broken only by the watergaps through which the Euphrates and the Tigris reach their lower course, isolate the Anatolian plateau from the Syrian tableland and the plains of Mesopotamia. At all times immigrants, invaders, and merchants from the East, heading for the Mediterranean seaboard, have journeyed along the crescent of fertile land which bends around the northern portion of the Syrian desert. The most important migration ever to follow this route was the migration of the Arameans, who settled in the Syrian districts of the interior, while the coastline continued to be held by the seafaring Phoenicians and while wandering Arabs grazed their flocks on the desert pastures. It is in the wake of the Aramean migration that Abraham and his kin made their first appearance in Palestine, which their descendants were to regard as their homeland.

The above geographical survey sets the stage for the struggle of the Empires, amidst which most of the events of Biblical history took place. The first act, in the second millennium, was the drive of the Hittites from Anatolia against Egypt. It resulted ultimately in a stalemate, and Palestine, at first neutralized between the two rivals, achieved political independence under the Hebrew kings. The second phase was marked by the expeditions of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian rulers. They failed to establish their domination permanently over Egypt, but the autonomy of the Hebrew states was brought to an end.

§ 2 The land of Canaan. Having considered Palestine in its geographical setting, we shall now describe its main natural divisions. The Jordan rift parts the country lengthwise from north to south. Western Palestine, between the sea and the river, is a well-defined unit, while Transjordan has no eastern boundary other than the precarious limit between the desert and the sown. The river Jordan is formed by the union of moun-

tain streams from the eastern and southern slopes of Mount Hermon. For some ten miles it flows through the Huleh basin, the lower part of it forming a shallow lake partly covered by thickets of papyrus. For the next ten miles it descends from an altitude of 223 feet above sea level to 695 feet below sea level, as it enters the Lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee. The lower course of the Jordan is less precipitous. From the Lake of Tiberias to the Dead Sea, 95 miles south as the crow flies and 1,285 feet below sea level, the river meanders in an impenetrable jungle (Jer.12.5) of tamarisks, oleanders, and other shrubs, often less than one mile across, to the right and left of which the terrace of the valley (called today the Ghor or Rift), with its sterile layers of marl, extends to the foot of the Transjordan ridge and of the Palestinian highlands. South of the Dead Sea the desert valley of the Arabah prolongs the Jordan rift toward the south, rising gradually to an altitude of 656 feet above sea level, about halfway between the southern shore of the Dead Sea and the Gulf of 'Aqaba.

The boundaries of ancient regions of the Transjordan ridge are clearly defined by the eastern tributaries of the Jordan and of the Dead Sea: north of the Yarmuk, Bashan; between the Yarmuk and the Jabbok, Gilead; between the Jabbok and the Arnon, the kingdom of Sihon and Ammon; between the Arnon and the Zered, Moab; south of the Zered, Edom.

We turn now to the natural divisions of western Palestine, from north to south. Galilee is bounded on the north by the lower course of the Litani, and on the south by the great plain which cuts diagonally from the sea to the Jordan rift. Upper Galilee reaches an altitude of 3,962 feet at Jebel Jermaq, contrasting with the smaller hills of lower Galilee; Mount Tabor, five miles east of Nazareth, is only 1,929 feet high. The Galilean relief is confused. There is no clear-cut parting of the waters flowing westward to the sea and eastward into the depths of the Jordan valley. The geological dislocation of the Galilean range has resulted in a number of basins and plains locked between rocky ridges, but relatively fertile if properly drained, while numerous olive groves thrive on artificial terraces.

At the foot of the Galilean hills lies the Plain of Esdraelon (or Jezreel), bounded on the south by the Carmel range, the northern edge of the highlands of Samaria, and Mount Gilboa. The central part of the Plain of Esdraelon communicates with the Plain of

Acco through the gap of the River Kishon, between Mount Carmel and a spur of the Galilean hills, and with the Jordan rift. It is a zone of great agricultural wealth and of strategic importance, as evidenced by a row of fortified cities guarding the access to central Palestine and to the Jordan, including Jokneam, Megiddo, Taanach, Ibleam, and Beth-shean.

The highlands of Samaria and Ephraim rise up from the fertile Plain of Sharon to a maximum height of 3,332 feet. Ascending from the Plain of Esdraelon, the road of the highlands linked together Samaria and Shechem, which controlled the pass between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Farther south the road followed the watershed almost continually, passing at or near Shiloh, Bethel, Mizpah, Ramah, Gibeah, and Jerusalem. From Shechem a path along the Wadi Far'a gave easy access to the Jordan valley, while mountain roads linked Jericho with Bethel

and Jerusalem. The western slopes of Samaria and Ephraim were rich in olive groves and vineyards, the eastern slopes being used as grazing grounds.

The natural divisions of southern Palestine are as follows. (1) The Philistine plain, along the sea. (2) The Shephelah, or Judean lowlands, guarded by the fortress of Lachish. (3) The "Hill Country of Judah," with a maximum altitude of 3,345 feet; the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and Hebron follows the watershed most of the time. (4) East of the watershed, the Wilderness of Judah overlooks the precipice of the Dead Sea. (5) The slopes to the south and southwest of the range extend toward the Negeb, without clear-cut limits. The Negeb of Judah and the desert provide extensive grazing grounds. The vineyards of the highlands were famous, and grains were cultivated on a large scale in the Shephelah and in the plain.

2. THE PEOPLE

§ 3 **Anthropological data.** The Israelites referred to the inhabitants of Palestine, whom they conquered in the time of Joshua, as Canaanites. The majority was of Semitic origin. The Bible names several of their clans, together with the remnants of aboriginal populations. Early in the second millennium important elements of non-Semitic peoples, including Hittites of Anatolia and Hurrians (Horites) from the upper course of the Euphrates, settled in Canaan and mingled with the Semites, or retained their separate identity, like the Hittites of Hebron, from whom Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah (Gen. ch. 23). The Hurrian contribution to Palestinian culture can be shown by a study of names of persons and places as well as by the products of their arts and crafts. There is evidence of Mediterranean influences in Canaanite art as early as 1500 B.C. A century later written documents attest the presence of elements of population from the Aegean area in the coastal regions of Palestine and in the Egyptian fortress-cities of the Plain of Esdraelon. Another wave brought in the Philistines from Crete, who settled on the southern coastal plain and made deep inroads in the districts of the interior, prior to the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites.

§ 4 **Canaanite city-states.** Canaanite settlement followed a pattern of decentraliza-

tion. Small city-states existed side by side in the neutralized no man's land which lay between the overlords of Anatolia and Egypt. The sovereignty of the Pharaohs over Palestine was more nominal than real. They regarded the fortresses of the Plain of Esdraelon and a few posts along the seaboard as adequate for the security of their northern advanced border. For the rest they relied on rivalries among the Canaanite chieftains to make a general rebellion unlikely. The economy of Canaanite Palestine was a rural economy, drawing its resources from agriculture and animal husbandry. Towns were market places and administrative or defense centers, rather than commercial or industrial centers. They contrasted sharply with the Phoenician cities, which subsisted primarily on trade from overseas.

§ 5 **The archaeology of Canaan.** Archaeological excavations have unearthed the remains of Canaanite towns built on hilltops or on some rocky ledge in the fork of two ravines. The area of such towns seldom exceeded twenty acres. Methods of fortification varied with local conditions. Sloping embankments, eventually faced with huge stones, were common. The walls, usually of sun-dried bricks, were built on foundations of field stones on the shoulder of the embankment. They were often reinforced with rectangular towers. Some larger towns and

cities had a double line of fortifications, or an acropolis having its own rampart within the perimeter of the city. City gates were as a rule flanked with towers; two or three pairs of massive piers protruded from either side of the gateway, leaving a passage wide enough to admit one or two chariots; wooden doors equipped with bronze hinge pivots revolving in stone sockets closed the passage. The esplanade outside the gate was used as a market place, open air court room, and meeting place for the city elders.

Supplying the city with water was a vital problem. Springs outside the walls could be intercepted by enemies. In order to obviate this danger several cities had underground passages leading from within the city-walls to a spring which could be walled in and concealed from without. It is presumably through the water shaft of the Jebusites that David's warriors conquered Jerusalem (2 Sam.5.8). Cisterns and reservoirs formed by damming up a ravine collected rain water, while regular wells, wherever possible, tapped the underground water table.

Each Canaanite city-state had its place or

places of worship, within or without the walls. So-called high places were open air enclosures marking the area sacred to the gods of the city. The divine power was thought to inhabit a pillar of stone, the *maššebah*, while a row of raised stones symbolized the families or clans of the worshipers. A sacred tree or a wooden post called the *asherah* played a role similar to that of the *maššebah*. A well or basin and a stone altar completed the main furnishings of the high place. In several instances, small rectangular temples, easily identified by utensils used in sacrificial worship, replaced or supplemented the original high place.

Natural caves in the vicinity of the town and sometimes within its perimeter were used for the burial of the dead. When such caves were not available, tombs were dug out of the rock. They consisted of a vertical shaft, eight to ten feet deep, giving access to one or several burial chambers. The dead were laid out on a layer of pebbles or a bench of hewn stones, and were provided with familiar objects, weapons, utensils, and provisions.

3. THE PEOPLE OF THE COVENANT

§ 6 **The Patriarchs.** The name "Patriarchs" is given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) and his sons, for whom the twelve tribes were named. The book of Genesis is our primary source for the history of the Patriarchal era. The narratives appear sometimes in duplicate or even triplicate form, suggesting the use of previous written sources or oral traditions. They refer to the Patriarchs as persons, although it is clear that the history of the Hebrew clans is implied in the history of their founders.

Within each generation individuals belonging to the same ancestral stock were dropped from the privileged line of descent. They were regarded as the ancestors of related tribes or nations upon which the Israelites looked with suspicion or hostility, while keeping the memory of their common origin. Such were Lot, "father" of the Moabites and Ammonites; Ishmael, "father" of the Arabs; the sons of Abraham by his concubines, who were sent away "eastward to the east country" (Gen.25.6); and Esau, "father" of the Edomites.

One may gather from Genesis that Abraham stemmed from Aramean shepherds and

herdsmen from the Fertile Crescent, who frequented the markets of such important centers as Haran and Ur of the Chaldeans. The Aramean origin of the Patriarchs is further evidenced by the linguistic shift from Aramean to Hebrew, as recorded in Genesis: Abram and Sarai changed their names to Abraham and Sarah when they settled in Canaan (Gen.17.5,15). This linguistic evolution was complete in the days of Jacob, who was nicknamed "the Aramean" (Dt.26.5) but who gave the Hebrew name "Galeed" to a stone marker which he erected jointly with his kinsmen, who called it in Aramaic "Jegar-sahadutha" (Gen.31.47).

The chronology of the Patriarchs has been much debated. All one can say with assurance is that certain cultural features extant in the Patriarchal narratives have their counterpart in the laws of Hammurabi and in the documents of Nuzi, a Hurrian colony in northern Mesopotamia. This points to a date not later than 1700 B.C. for the beginning of the Patriarchal era.

The Patriarchs and their people can be described as semi-nomads who grazed their flocks of sheep and goats in the unsettled

areas of Palestine and came into contact with the sedentary populations when trading their cattle, cheese, butter, and wool for articles manufactured by Canaanite craftsmen. Their activity revolved around a number of centers or encampments generally located in the vicinity of urban markets. Each of these encampments had its place of worship, sacred to the god of the clan, and marked with a sacred tree or grove, in the shadow of which an altar was built or a *maš-šebah* erected, much in the manner of Canaanite high places.

The main encampments of the Patriarchs are recorded in Genesis: Shechem, their first station in Canaan (Gen.12.6-7); the encampment between Bethel and Ai, where Abram and Lot parted (Gen.12.8; 13.3-11); Mamre, where God appeared to Abraham, a short distance north of Hebron, where the cave of Machpelah became the main burial place of the Patriarchs (Gen.13.18; 18.1; 23.7-20); Beer-sheba in the Negeb, where they concluded an agreement with local rulers concerning grazing rights (Gen.21.25-34).

The Jacob narratives suggest a strong tendency toward a sedentary way of life. On his return from the Aramean countries, Jacob built a house at Succoth in the Jordan valley (Gen.33.17). At Shechem he owned a field and a well (Gen.33.19; compare Jn.4.6). Later he is said to have occupied permanently the encampment at Mamre, while he sent his sons to graze their flocks as far as Dothan in northern Samaria (Gen.35.27; 37.17).

The main historical substance of the story of Joseph and his brothers amounts to the following. A famine drove the Israelites out of Canaan. They descended into Egypt and were resettled in pasture lands on the eastern border of the Delta. The attraction which Egypt exercised upon them is well illustrated by tomb-paintings discovered at Beni-hasan in Middle Egypt, representing a caravan of Semitic immigrants in many-colored robes being introduced to the governor. The welcome received by the sons of Jacob and the elevation of Joseph to a position of authority may suggest that the descent of the Israelites occurred when foreign kings of Asiatic origin, the Hyksos, ruled Egypt.

§ 7 The days of Moses. "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." These words in Ex.1.8 refer to the restoration of a national Egyptian dynasty after the expulsion of the Hyksos rulers. Foreigners were regarded with suspicion and hostility. The Israelites were drafted into

forced labor under the whip of harsh overseers. A man of the tribe of Levi, Moses, who had to flee for his life after killing one of these Egyptian taskmasters and who sought asylum among Midianite tribesmen, came back to Egypt for the God-inspired purpose of liberating his people. The Israelites fled by night, were miraculously saved from being recaptured by Egyptian forces sent after them, and journeyed to Mount Horeb, or Sinai.

If one assumes Canaan to have been the goal of the Israelites, their march to Horeb through the wild gorges of the peninsula appears preposterous. But we should remember that the Biblical record in no way implies that they chose one of the normal routes from Egypt to Canaan. Nor was their choice guided primarily by strategic considerations. There is ample evidence that Moses' immediate objective was to lead the people to the place where God had ordered them to convene.

The historical contents of the Biblical traditions relative to the covenant at Horeb may be summarized as follows. First, the tribes named after the sons of Jacob (Israel) were for the first time constituted as one nation under the God who had been the protector of the Patriarchs, and whose name Yahweh (see Ex.3.15 note *f*) covered his mysterious identity. Second, the entire legislation of the Israelites had its leading principle in the covenant, established when the Decalogue was given to Moses. There is little doubt that the statutes, eventually revised to meet new situations, originated in the Mosaic institution. They embody provisions already found in legal codes of the ancient Near East, but the integrating factor, namely ethical monotheism, was unique. Third, the religious organization of Israel was derived, as a whole, from the Sinaitic institution. The worship of the nation revolved around the ark of the covenant, which was the monument of God's presence among his people.

The Biblical descriptions of the ark seem to combine two different conceptions. According to one tradition, the ark was a wooden chest in which the stone tables of the Law were kept. Another tradition regarded the ark as the portable throne of God, who was said to reside invisibly between the cherubim. These were two figures facing each other whose wings overshadowed the "mercy seat," which the author of Exodus regarded as identical with, or structurally related to, the lid of the chest.

The most important station of the Israelites

on their journey to Canaan was Kadesh-barnea in the wastelands of the Negeb, on a caravan road from the Isthmus of Suez to Beer-sheba (Num.13.26; 20.1). From Kadesh an exploring party was sent to reconnoiter the border of Canaan, but a direct invasion from the south proved impossible, and the Israelites detoured via Edom and the territory of Moab, from whence they were to strike from the east (Num. chs. 13-14 and ch. 20ff.).

The chronology of the Exodus is far from certain. We do not know who Joseph's Pharaoh was, nor under whose reign the Israelites fled from Egypt. Numerical data in the Bible, such as the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, cannot be related to Egyptian chronology. They belong in a pattern of symbolism, the meaning of which escapes us. The fact that several Canaanite cities were destroyed in the second half of the thirteenth century B.C., in the opinion of leading archaeologists, suggests a general invasion of Canaan, which can possibly be ascribed to the forces of Joshua. This might substantiate the dating of the Exodus during the reign of Rameses II (see Ex. 1.8 n.).

§ 8 The conquest of Canaan. The pattern of the conquest as recorded in the book of Joshua is one of grand strategy. After the death of Moses the host of Israel under the command of Joshua marched from their encampment down the ridge of Moab, crossed the Jordan, and captured Jericho and Ai, thus gaining a foothold in the central highlands (Jos. chs. 2-8). From thence a successful campaign against the local chieftains, who had formed a league under Adonizedek, "king" of Jerusalem, gave Joshua control of the south (Jos. ch. 10). A sweeping move northward resulted in the defeat of the "king" of Hazor and his associates in Galilee (Jos.11.1-15).

One suspects some artificiality in this literary scheme. The Old Testament itself suggests that unrelated actions were fought by individual clans or by foreign groups allied to the Israelites, like the Calebites who occupied a district southwest of Hebron (Jos.14.6-15). Furthermore the book of Judges makes it plain that in several instances the Israelites had been unable to dislodge the Canaanites from their strongholds. An outstanding example was Jerusalem, which remained in the hands of the Jebusites until it was captured by David (Jg.1.19,21).

The settlement of the tribes is described by

the author of the book of Joshua, who gives an outline of their borders and a list of their principal cities (Jos. chs. 13-21). Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh settled in Transjordan on lands formerly held by defeated local chieftains, Sihon the Amorite and Og, "king" of Bashan. Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar occupied the districts of Galilee and part of the Plain of Esdraelon. A third group composed of the western half of Manasseh and of Ephraim, jointly known as the "house of Joseph," settled in central Palestine. On the southern border of Ephraim dwelt Benjamin and Dan, but part of the Danites emigrated to the springs of the Jordan. Southern Palestine fell to Judah, in the inheritance of which Simeon was assigned ill-defined possessions, while the estates granted to the Levites were distributed throughout the territory of the other tribes.

The social significance of the settlement cannot be exaggerated. The tribes, originally nomadic groups of tent-dwellers, now became identified with assigned territories, and the bonds of clansmen descended from a common ancestor were gradually replaced by the solidarity of villagers born in the land they were tilling.

The population of the districts thus apportioned was far from homogeneous. Israelites lived side by side with the Canaanites whom they had overrun but only partially conquered. Canaanite cities were still holding their own in various parts of the country. Some districts were solidly occupied by foreign elements, like the enclave of Caleb in the south of Judah (Jos.15.13-19), or the four cities of the Gibeonites (Jos.9.17) which were to play an important part in subsequent political and religious developments.

The national existence of the Israelites was at first most precarious. The incurable individualism of the tribes, their rivalries and feuds, prevented them from presenting a solid front against the recurrent hostility of their neighbors. The adoption by the Israelites of the way of life of the Canaanites, intermarriages, and participation in local religious cults, were equally pernicious. The book of Judges is full of these problems of coexistence. The ephemeral authority of inspired leaders such as Deborah (Jg.4.4-5.31) and Gideon (Jg.6.11-8.28) could help solve major crises, but offered no permanent remedy against the ingrained anarchy of the Israelites, who had lost the rugged virtues of tribesmen and had not yet matured as citizens.

4. THE HEBREW KINGDOMS

§ 9 **Rise of the monarchy.** The end of the second millennium B.C., around 1300–1000, was characterized by a general movement of monarchic centralization which did away with the old feudal pattern. Self-supporting states emerged, each under the authority of its king, who had nothing but the title in common with the Canaanite “kings” who lorded it over their kinsmen and the tenants of their estates. Ammon and Moab in Transjordan, as well as the Arameans in Syria, constituted themselves typical monarchies. In the highlands of Samaria, Abimelech, son of Gideon (Jerubbaal), had himself proclaimed king at Shechem (Jg.9.1–57), but he was unable to cope with problems of Hebrew-Canaanite relationships and the attempt proved abortive.

The pressure of external events prompted the Israelites to unite permanently under the scepter of Saul. The Ammonites raided the Israelites of Transjordan and threatened the eastern border of Palestine. In the west the danger came from the Philistines. This people seems to have been ubiquitous, but their principal habitat was the southern half of the coastal plain. Numerous samples of painted pottery, decorated with a combination of geometric patterns and over-stylized figures of birds, have been found in this region and are commonly attributed to Philistine craftsmen. The nation was organized as a federation of five cities, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, Gath, and Ekron, under their “tyrants.” But textual as well as archaeological evidence shows that they were well on the way to infiltrate and eventually to subjugate the whole of Palestine. They held a strict monopoly on iron, a metal which was not used in Palestine prior to 1200 B.C. They controlled the major part of the Shephelah and the Plain of Sharon. Philistine raiding parties plundered the countryside of Judah and Ephraim. Shiloh was ransacked and the ark of the covenant was carried away as a war trophy (1 Sam.4.11). It even seems that the Philistines occupied for some time a strategic outpost in the highlands of Benjamin, intercepting the road between Geba and Michmash.

In the face of such perils the Israelites called Saul, a tribesman of warlike Benjamin, to reign over them. This was in a sense a departure from the religious ideal of Moses, who envisioned Israel as a theocratic nation under God-appointed leaders, but not under a monarch chosen by popular acclaim. Sam-

uel, the last of such leaders who judged Israel, tried in vain to dissuade the people, but their desire prevailed (1 Sam. ch. 8).

The monarchy of Saul had all the characteristics of an emergency dictatorship. He established his capital at Gibeah in the heart of Benjamin. The foundations of his palace-fortress have been unearthed from the hillock of Tell el-Ful, five short miles north of Jerusalem.

A vigorous action neutralized the Ammonite threat. The Philistines were dislodged from their strategic positions and thrown back into the lowlands, but Saul's attack of the Philistine forces holding the Plain of Esdraelon resulted in the defeat of the Israelites. Saul and his son Jonathan were slain and their armor exhibited in the temple of Ashtaroth at Beth-shan (1 Sam.31.10), perhaps to be identified with a little shrine which is dated, on archaeological evidence, from the eleventh to the tenth century B.C.

Even if the monarchy of Saul had not met its tragic fate, it is doubtful whether it could have ever achieved a reasonable measure of stability. The urgent problem of non-Israelite minorities had been treated high-handedly, and Saul had manifested his intolerance as well as his total lack of moral or political restraint in ordering the massacre of the Gibeonites (2 Sam.21.1), in violation of the solemn pledge given them by Joshua. Nor were his policies toward the other tribes of Israel much better advised. The banishment of young David, whom he feared as a potential rival, did much to stir up feelings of suspicion and resentment between the men of Judah and the Israelites of central Palestine.

§ 10 **David and Solomon.** After precarious days as an outlaw in the wilderness of Judah and a refugee among the Philistines, David was anointed by the men of Judah to reign in Hebron, shortly after 1000 B.C. (2 Sam.2.1–4). After seven difficult years, during which he managed to gain some influence over the northern tribes, he was proclaimed king over the entire nation and made Jerusalem, which he had just captured from the Jebusites, his capital (2 Sam.5.6–10). This was excellent politics, for Jerusalem could be considered neutral ground between Judah and Benjamin. One would no longer think of the king as a man of a tribe eager to lord it over the others, but as the permanent leader and arbiter of the nation, including foreign minorities to which some consideration was to be given.

At first unanimous popular support enabled David to fight the foreign wars to a finish. Ammon was thoroughly defeated, the Philistines were driven back into the plain, and the frontiers of Israel were firmly secured. Yet the particularism of the tribes flared up once again when a party of malcontents led by Absalom, David's own son, forced the king into temporary exile. The revolt was put down with great difficulty (2 Sam. chs. 15-18), and much unfinished business was left for his successor.

David is said to have reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem (1 Kg.2.11). Toward the end he prevented a crisis of succession by having Solomon anointed and enthroned (1 Kg. ch. 1).

The outstanding achievement of the new reign, to which the Old Testament ascribes a conventional duration of forty years, was the building of the temple. Like all important constructions of this period it required foreign cooperation. Hiram of Tyre provided specialized craftsmen and timber from Lebanon (1 Kg.5.1-12). The temple was part of a compound which integrated the king's palace with the dwelling of the Lord. This arrangement, inspired by the Oriental conception of the king being the incarnation of the divinity, was regarded with misgivings by the prophets, who feared an encroachment upon the transcendence of God (compare Ezek.43.8). The temple of Jerusalem, as a national sanctuary, never completely superseded the shrines of the country, and their persistent survival is denounced in the historical and prophetic writings.

The house of the Lord consisted essentially of a long nave in which were ten lampstands, a table for the bread of the Presence, and the altar of incense. From thence one gained access to the inner sanctuary, a chamber (30' x 30' x 30') containing the ark, which David had brought back from Kiriath-jearim, and two cherubim, fifteen feet high, made of olive wood and overlaid with gold. The "house" was entered from the east by means of a vestibule flanked with pillars of bronze. The altar of burnt offering stood in the courtyard in front of the temple, where the sacrificial service took place. The carved ivories found at Arslan Tash and Megiddo, engraved with winged figures and floral or geometrical patterns, constitute a valid analogy to the decoration of the temple and its furnishings.

In the administrative order the division of the country into fiscal districts, not without some gerrymandering, provided a better inte-

gration of minority groups with the Israelites. A new system of government replaced the arbitrary rule of petty tyrants and their satellites. There arose a class of responsible officials similar to the Egyptian scribes, and the names of departmental heads have been preserved in the Bible (1 Kg.4.1-19). Foreign trade and industry were a royal monopoly. The king's commercial agents are mentioned among other crown officials. Special reference is made to the purchase of chariots and teams of horses for the army or for re-exportation abroad (1 Kg.10.26-29). The occupation of the Negeb made possible the exploitation of iron and copper mines east of the Arabah and the establishment of a naval base at Elath (Ezion-geber), the ruins of which have been discovered near 'Aqaba together with those of a smelting plant. A fleet manned by Phoenician sailors sailed periodically to south Arabia, India, and east Africa, bringing back gold, gems, and exotic products (1 Kg.9.26-28; 10.22).

§ 11 The divided monarchy: Judah and Israel. The chronology of David and Solomon may be regarded as conventionalized. Beginning with the schism of Jeroboam and the divided monarchy, however, dates and correlations of the chronologies of Israel and Judah multiply and the historical perspective becomes clearer, though some problems are still much debated. The dates which are given here are in accord with the system proposed by Edwin R. Thiele; for a full conspectus of these, as well as the dates of an alternative system developed by William F. Albright, see the Chronological Table, pp. 1532f.

The personal prestige of Solomon and his efficient administration had driven underground those who favored a divided monarchy. Rehoboam, who succeeded his father in 931 B.C., made himself unpopular from the start (1 Kg. ch. 12). His arrogance and an increased taxation recklessly enforced undid the superficial unity which had been painstakingly achieved. The Israelites of central and northern Palestine seceded under Jeroboam, leaving Judah alone in the south. The common frontier, at first hotly contested, cut transversally through the territory of Benjamin. The dynastic stability of the kingdom of Judah, faithful to the house of David, compensated for the limited extent of its territory; on the other hand, the kingdom of Israel went through eight crises of royal succession during the two centuries of its existence.

Jeroboam fortified Shechem and made it the first capital of the northern kingdom

(1 Kg.12.25). Later he seems to have taken up royal residence at Tirzah, famed for its beauty (1 Kg.14.17; S. of S.6.4). This city remained the capital of the ten tribes until about 880 B.C., when Omri established himself on the hill of Samaria (1 Kg.16.23-24). Archaeological excavations have laid bare the foundations of the palace at Samaria. The entire area was surrounded by a double cased wall. In a room of the king's house were found carved plaques of ivory, partly gilded and inlaid, which had been used to decorate wooden pieces of furniture. They show an eclectic inspiration, combining Egyptian, Oriental, and Mediterranean motifs: the child Horus on a lotus flower, the djed pillar flanked by female deities, lilies, and palmated ornaments, various types of sphinxes and winged figures, a woman's head in a rectangular frame, and animals. They are similar to ivories discovered in the ruins of Hadatu (Arslan Tash), where the Assyrians had carried them as war booty from the palace of Hazael in Damascus. Storehouses contained a large number of broken jars which, judging from inscriptions penned in ancient Hebrew script, contained the oil and wine delivered to the royal treasury in payment of taxes. These inscriptions have made it possible to establish a list of fiscal districts of the northern kingdom, which must have reached a high level of prosperity.

Foreign trade was flourishing. A wealthy class of traders and craftsmen began to develop in urban centers. Close political and economic relations were established between the kingdom of Israel and the Phoenician city-state of Sidon. This, however, did much to bring about a recrudescence of pagan cults which were bitterly opposed by Elijah and other prophets.

A similar evolution took place in the kingdom of Judah. The economy was still predominantly rural. Uzziah (Azariah) did much to intensify the cultivation of the royal domain and ordered the digging of cisterns and the building of watchtowers in the countryside (2 Chr.26.10). Meanwhile craftsmen and merchants set up their shops in the streets of the capital and regional centers such as Hebron and Lachish. The exploitation of the mines in the Arabah and the maritime enterprises of Solomon went on with some intermittence, depending on whether or not the kings of Judah were able to guarantee the security of the caravans through the Negeb and on the Edomite border.

Israel ranged from open hostility to an uneasy coexistence abundant in plots and intrigues, and even to occasional confederation, as, for example, the ill-fated expedition of Jehoshaphat and Ahab against the Syrians (1 Kg.22.29-40), or the campaign of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram of Israel against Mesha, recorded in 2 Kg.3.4-27 and on the so-called Moabite Stone, discovered in 1868 and preserved in the Louvre at Paris.

While Judah felt relatively secure once its northern frontier had been stabilized, the Israelites were much more vulnerable. They had a standing quarrel with the kingdom of Damascus for the possession of Gilead, and their own territory was repeatedly invaded by the Syrian forces. Worse yet, the westward expansion of the Assyrian empire had begun and could not be stopped despite ineffectual attempts by Samaria and Damascus to lay aside their differences and offer a united front against the invaders. The progress of the Assyrians may be followed by means of the Biblical record and of cuneiform texts, from the battle of Qarqar on the Orontes, when Ahab and the Syrians were defeated in 853 B.C., to the imposition of tributes successively upon Jehu (841-814), Menahem (752-742), and Hoshea, the last king of Israel (732-722). The final act was the long siege of Samaria by the armies of Shalmaneser V. Sargon II, who succeeded his brother Shalmaneser in 722 B.C., claimed the ultimate victory. A large number of Israelites from central Palestine was deported, and displaced tribes from the Babylonian borderlands were relocated on the territory of Israel (2 Kg. ch. 17).

The next blow fell on Judah. The campaign of Sennacherib, Sargon's successor, is recorded at length on a hexagonal prism of clay inscribed in Assyrian cuneiform. In 701 B.C. the Assyrians invaded the Philistine plain and the Shephelah and besieged Lachish, the fall of which is represented with great topographic accuracy on reliefs from the palace of Nineveh, preserved in the British Museum (see also 2 Kg. ch. 18). Meanwhile Hezekiah (716-687) worked feverishly to strengthen the fortifications of Jerusalem. A tunnel-aqueduct was hewn from the solid rock to divert the waters of the Gihon to the pool of Siloam, located within the walls (2 Kg.20.20). An inscription in ancient Hebrew script relates the details of the enterprise. Jerusalem, already surrounded, was unexpectedly delivered, owing to an epidemic which all but annihilated the Assyrian forces (2 Kg.19.35).

A troubled period followed, during which

the Assyrians meddled continually with the affairs of the kingdom of Judah. Josiah (640–609 B.C.) seems to have gained some brief authority over the territory of Israel, presumably with the agreement of the Assyrian overlords. He initiated a general religious reform, following the discovery of an unknown scroll of the Law in 622 (2 Kg. chs. 22–23). The character of his reformation suggests a definite relation between the scroll discovered in the temple and the book of Deuteronomy. Despite Josiah's efforts, however, a strong current of syncretism still pervaded the religion of the temple. In politics an influential party advocated an Egyptian alliance, which was consistently opposed by the prophets.

The rise of the Neo-Babylonian empire after the collapse of the Assyrian monarchy in 612 B.C. ushered in a new era of hostilities.

Under Nebuchadnezzar "the Chaldeans," following the same itinerary as Sennacherib, captured Lachish, which apparently had been reoccupied by the Judeans. Letters written in ancient Hebrew script, discovered in the ruins in 1935, refer to miscellaneous events which preceded the beginning of the siege of the city in 588 B.C. One of these letters had been sent to the commander of Lachish by a subordinate in charge of an outpost. He notified him that the fire signals from Azekah, ten miles north of Lachish, had ceased; obviously Azekah had just succumbed. Thereafter the siege of Jerusalem followed in short order. The walls were stormed and the temple destroyed in the summer of 586 B.C. The elite of the people of Judah were deported, while proletarians were left in the country under the rule of Babylonian governors.

5. POST-EXILIC PALESTINE

§ 13 **The remnant that returned.** The Babylonian captivity resulted in a drastic reappraisal by the Jews of their cultural and religious heritage. The exiles had to abandon their way of life as landowners and to adapt themselves to their new environment. They took up various professions, international trade, and banking, as one may gather from numerous tablets of contracts in Neo-Babylonian cuneiform. Soon, however, Babylonian was replaced by Aramaic as the common language in commercial transactions, and this change may account for the fact that part of the book of Daniel is written in Aramaic, and that the so-called square letters of the Aramaic alphabet replaced the ancient Hebrew script.

It became clear that no matter how many exiles might eventually return to the homeland, a substantial number, and these not the least wealthy or the least influential, would stay in Babylonia and even prosper there. The same could be said of the voluntary expatriates who settled in Egypt in increasing numbers. From now on there would be an "Israel abroad."

This all demanded a reinterpretation of Israel's religious heritage, the ritual and sacrificial elements of which had been stressed by the priestly caste at the expense of spiritual values, much to the dismay of the prophets. But now that the temple lay in ruins, the religious life of the exiles had to feed on past memories; henceforward the emphasis would be on the teaching of the

Law and the collecting of the utterances of Israel's sages and prophets.

Meanwhile, some of the exiles had not given up dreams of a restoration. Ezekiel outlined for them the ideal image of Israel as a theocracy in conformity with pre-monarchic conceptions, and the ideal temple, which would stand in absolute isolation from everything profane. The Lord God would have nothing in common with earthly rulers.

The dream came true. The armies of Cyrus, king of Persia since 555 B.C., king of the Medes and Persians since 549, entered Babylon and put an end to the domination of the Chaldeans. The new empire was conceived as a commonwealth of provinces enjoying a large degree of autonomy under the control of their viceroys or satraps. Seals and coins, in fact the earliest coins known to have been minted in Palestine, were inscribed with the word *Yehud*, which was the name of the Persian province of Judea. These coins were used along with the royal gold currency.

The edict of 538 B.C. authorized the exiles to return to their country (Ezra 1.2–4; 6.2–5). This was in execution of a general policy of relocation of "displaced persons" on a voluntary basis. A considerable number of Jews availed themselves of the edict; they organized convoys to journey back to Palestine, where they often found their old homes occupied by the proletarians left by the Chaldeans.

The facts and circumstances of the restoration are recorded in the books of Ezra and

Nehemiah, two scribes who had been endowed with official authority as royal commissioners. The historical substance of these books can be given credit, although the sequence and chronology of the events which they relate pose serious problems. Documentary and archaeological evidence shows that the relocation of the exiles was particularly concentrated in the vicinity of Jerusalem and in the southern part of the Shephelah. Southern Palestine came to be known as Idumea, for the Edomites had settled there after the Babylonian conquest.

The first achievement of the returning exiles was the building of the second temple. The construction had begun under the administration of Zerubbabel, a royal commissioner, who seems to have been subsequently recalled. After several interruptions the work was completed in the spring of 515 B.C. during the reign of Darius. The new sanctuary reproduced the structure of the temple of Solomon, with the essential difference that the invisible presence of God was no longer attached to a man-made object as it had been to the ark.

Next the walls and gates of Jerusalem were repaired under Nehemiah, who organized the men of Judah in gangs, each responsible for a particular section of the rampart. The dedication took place in 443 B.C., during the reign of Artaxerxes I (Longimanus). The work of restoration had been fiercely opposed by Sanballat, governor of Samaria, and Tobiah, the Ammonite. The Samaritans are mentioned in this context for the first time as an organized group hostile to the Jews (Neh.4.2). They were the descendants of the colonists established by the Assyrians in the territory of Israel. They had adopted the religion of the Jews, on the theory that it was fitting to worship the tutelary god of their new country. The center of their cult was the summit of Mount Gerizim; here the few hundred Samaritans who live today in Nablus still gather annually for their Passover rites.

§ 14 The invasion of Hellenism. The conquests of Alexander the Great, from the time of his landing in Troas (334 B.C.) to his death in Babylon (323), revolutionized the political, economic, and cultural life of the entire Near East, including Egypt. In the ensuing struggle for Alexander's succession, Judea was claimed by the Ptolemies of Egypt, until it passed under the allegiance of the Seleucids of Antioch in 198 B.C., when Antiochus the Great defeated the Egyptian forces at Panias.

Hellenistic culture spread through the

countries of the Near East at an amazing rate. Greek came to be spoken and written almost everywhere. International trade flourished. The Nabatean caravan leaders, who specialized in the south Arabian transit in competition with the maritime enterprises of the Ptolemies, were soon to organize themselves as an independent state, being followed later by the Palmyrenians, who monopolized the communications with central Asia. Archaeological and documentary evidence points to the importance of Marisa in Idumea, where hellenized Sidonian merchants acted as commercial agents for the Ptolemies. An artistic syncretism developed which combined the traditions of Greek and Oriental architecture, and a similar movement of integration took place between Oriental and Greek cults and mystery religions.

This cultural revolution affected the Jews in various ways. They seem to have been treated with fairness by the Ptolemies, who had adopted a policy of broad tolerance. The so-called "Letter of Aristaeas" attributes to Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.) the initiative in having the sacred writings of the Jews translated into Greek. Whether or not the details of the story are authentic, it appears that the Greek version of the Bible known as the Septuagint had its beginnings at Alexandria in the course of the third century B.C. There were precedents for such a translation of the Bible, parts of which had been rendered into Aramaic and into the Samaritan dialect. The Septuagint, as it was transmitted to the Christian church, was not completed until the beginning of the first century B.C. It was made to include, in addition to the books of the Hebrew Bible, the books of the Maccabees, the historical novels of Tobit and Judith, the Greek additions to Daniel and Esther, the book of Baruch, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus. These writings, known as the Apocrypha, are not included in the canon of Protestant Bibles (see p. xxiv). Some of them may be translations of Hebrew or Aramaic originals. Important fragments of a Hebrew and Aramaic text of several of these books were discovered at Qumran by the Dead Sea.

§ 15 The Seleucid policy of imposing Greek culture and customs upon subjugated peoples contrasted with the tolerance of the Ptolemies. To be sure, Hellenism had made inroads among the Jews themselves. There was a strong party favoring the adoption of the new culture, even to the point of apostasy from the Mosaic observances, and it is hinted

by some ancient writers that the profanation of the second temple, which Antiochus Epiphanes dedicated to Zeus Olympius in 167 B.C., was not opposed by the Hellenist Jews, who rather welcomed the assimilation of the Lord God to the highest god of paganism.

This was more, however, than the orthodox could bear. They revolted. Their leader, Judas "the Maccabee," of the priestly family of the Hasmoneans, campaigned successfully against the Syrians. The temple was purified in 164 B.C.; this is the origin of the Hanukkah festival of the Jews (Jn.10.22). The autonomy of the Jews was recognized grudgingly by the Seleucid overlords. After the death of Judas in 160 B.C., the Jewish state of the Hasmoneans continued until 40 B.C., thus outlasting the Seleucids, whose discords were brought to an end when Pompey made Syria a Roman province in 63 B.C.

Our sources for the history of the entire period are the books of the Maccabees, Josephus, and archaeological evidence, especially Jewish coinage. The latter reflects the growing ambition of the Hasmoneans, who at first were recognized only as high priests and ethnarchs of the Jewish community but who, beginning with Aristobulus (104-103 B.C.), assumed the title of kings, despite the opposition of the Pharisees.

Growing political and religious divisions weakened the dynasty. The Sadducees, a politically-minded aristocracy, were not adverse to what they regarded as necessary concessions to the spirit of the times. The Pharisees, on the contrary, strove to maintain the separateness of the nation by refining upon the legal observances of the Mosaic code. Another religious sect, related to or identical with the Essenes described by Josephus, sought refuge in complete isolation from national life. Theirs was an ideal of ethical asceticism with strong eschatological overtones, as evidenced by the Zadokite documents discovered in Cairo in 1896, and the scrolls discovered more recently in caves near the ruins of an ancient community center at Qumran by the Dead Sea. These documents throw some light on the way of life and the preaching of John the Baptist, and indirectly on the environment of early Christianity.

§ 16 Rome's order. When Augustus became Emperor in 27 B.C., Syria, which had been under Roman protectorate since its conquest by Pompey, was given the status of an imperial province, governed by a legate.

For reasons of political expediency Palestine and adjacent territories were left under the authority of local princes. After the collapse of the Hasmonean dynasty, Herod the Great had been made king by senatorial decree. He reigned from 37 to 4 B.C., courting the Romans and ridding himself of his enemies astutely and ruthlessly.

Herod's building programs show his versatility: dungeon-like fortress-palaces in secluded parts of the country, where he could retire and plot without being observed, and seek refuge if need be; luxurious country estates in the valley of the Jordan, and a winter palace south of Jericho; public buildings, often inspired by political considerations, as in pagan Ashkelon, Herod's birthplace, and Samaria, where a temple was built to the Emperor Augustus; monumental enclosures around the burial grounds of Machpelah in Hebron and at Mamre, north of the town. The perennial problem of supplying Jerusalem with water was solved by the construction of an aqueduct leading from two groups of springs south of Bethlehem. The fortress covering the northwestern angle of Jerusalem, known as the Tower of the Ovens, was rebuilt as a fortified residence with sumptuous courtyards and apartments.

The construction of the temple of Jerusalem was Herod's chief undertaking. The "house" was surrounded by extensive courtyards lined with porticoes. Josephus describes the successive precincts, access to which was restricted to certain categories of persons according to their degree of consecration to God. Gentiles were admitted only in the outer zone, the limits of which were marked by a railing, trespassers being threatened with death.

After the death of Herod in 4 B.C., Palestine passed under the rule of tetrarchs: Archelaus (4 B.C.-A.D. 6), over Judea and Samaria; Herod Antipas (4 B.C.-A.D. 39), over Samaria; Philip (4 B.C.-A.D. 34), over the districts of Iturea and Trachonitis, south-east of Mount Hermon. Palestine was unified again under Herod Agrippa I, who ruled the tetrarchy of Philip from A.D. 37, Galilee from 39, Samaria and Judea from 41, until his death in 44. Later Herod Agrippa II acquired the tetrarchy of Philip and several Galilean towns from respectively A.D. 53 and 56 to about 100. During the intervals between these reigns, the northern districts were administered directly by the imperial legate of Syria, while Samaria and Judea were placed under the jurisdiction of a Roman procurator residing at Caesarea on the sea (see p. 1534).

§ 17 The sequence of political events in the preceding section supplies the chronological framework for the life of Christ and the activity of his first disciples. Jesus was born about four or five years before the Christian era. (His birth occurred sometime prior to the death of Herod the Great, who, according to Josephus, died shortly before April 12, 4 B.C. The traditional Christian calendar was devised about A.D. 525 by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman abbot, who unfortunately erred by four or five years in his calculations.) According to Luke (3.1) Jesus was baptized by John in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. If one counts from the death of Augustus, this comes to A.D. 28/29; but if, as some think more probable, one reckons from the year of the association of Tiberius with Augustus as joint ruler, the date is A.D. 26/27. Luke goes on to say that Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea, Herod [Antipas] tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, a region northwest of Damascus. The year of the crucifixion, under Pontius Pilate, is uncertain, though the year 30 has a high degree of probability. At the time of the conversion of Paul, Damascus was in the hands of Aretas (Hareitat), king of the Nabateans, about A.D. 37 to 40 (2 Cor. 11.32). Acts 18.12 records the presence of Paul in Corinth under the proconsulate of Gallio, A.D. 51/52. According to Acts 24.27 Paul had been in prison for two years when Felix, procurator of Judea, was recalled by Nero, and the apostle, having appealed to Caesar (Acts 25.11-12), was sent to Rome by Festus, who took office about A.D. 60.

The history of the Herodians and of the procurators abounds in riots and attempted rebellions against the ruling power. The glens of upper Galilee were haunted by frustrated Jewish patriots, malcontents, and outlaws of every description. The revolt against the Romans broke out under Vespasian in the summer of A.D. 66. The events of the war are recorded with the utmost detail by Josephus, from the initial successes of the Jews to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70. The local currency of these years illustrates vividly the general march of events. The Jews had minted silver shekels (erroneously attributed to the Maccabees) as a symbol of national independence. The rapidly deteriorating situation of the Jewish nation-

alists, when the Roman armies, at first surprised, began to react, is shown by the poorer standards and the scarcity of the Jewish silver shekels from the third year of independence onward, when bronze tokens were used as substitutes. The triumphal arch of Titus, erected at Rome in 71, and imperial coins bearing the words *Judaea capta*, marked the victory of the Roman arms. A garrison of desperadoes held out until 73 in the fortress of Masada, a former Maccabean stronghold rebuilt by Herod the Great.

In spite of strict administrative measures taken by the Roman legates of Syria, who had jurisdiction over Palestine, another revolt broke out under Hadrian in A.D. 132. References to and letters from the leader, Simon ben Koziba, nicknamed Bar Kochba, have been found in the caves of Murabba'at in the desert of Judah. The Romans were at first unable to stem the rebellion, but reinforcements arrived, and Jerusalem, which had fallen to Bar Kochba's men, was recaptured in 134. The insurrection was brought to an end one year later when Bar Kochba was buried under the ruins of the fortified village of Bittir, where he had made his last stand. Jerusalem was renamed Colonia Aelia Capitolina, and a shrine was dedicated to Zeus and Hadrian in the temple area.

The collapse of Israel as a nation ushered in a new era. Judaism had to forgo its earthly ties, and the Messianic hope had to be reinterpreted. The seed of David was extinct, the temple would not be rebuilt, and the people were scattered among the Gentiles. There remained only the Book, and in the reading of the sacred page Israel would slowly discover its mission in the world.

The church had received from its Founder the mission to preach the gospel to all creatures. Thus the word was proclaimed "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1.8), and the power of God confirmed the word. Was this not the true fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh" (Jl.2.28)? The eternal had broken through into time. Almost from the start the church made a clean departure from historical contingencies, straining forward to what lies ahead: not Israel among the nations, but the nations as the new Israel, brought to the obedience of Christ.

MEASURES AND WEIGHTS IN THE BIBLE

1. HEBREW MEASURES OF LENGTH

<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>RSV</i>	<i>Equivalence</i>	<i>U.S. Measures</i>
'ammāh	cubit	2 spans	17.49 inches
zéreth	span	3 handbreadths	8.745 inches
ṭōphah, ṭéphah	handbreadth	4 fingers	2.915 inches
'ešba'	finger		0.728 inch

The cubit described in Ezekiel (40.5; 43.13) is equal to seven (not six) handbreadths, namely 20.405 inches.

2. MEASURES OF LENGTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

<i>Greek</i>	<i>RSV</i>	<i>U.S. Measures</i>
pēchus	cubit	about 1½ feet
orguia	fathom	about 72.44 inches
stadion	furlong, stadia, or the equivalent in miles	about 606 feet
milion	mile	about 4,879 feet

3. HEBREW MEASURES OF CAPACITY

a. DRY MEASURES

<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>RSV</i>	<i>Equivalence</i>	<i>U.S. Measures</i>
ḥōmer	homer	} 2 lethechs	6.524 bushels
kōr	measure, cor		
lēthekh	lethech	5 ephahs	3.262 bushels
'ēphāh	ephah, measure	3 seahs	20.878 quarts
se'āh	measure	3½ omers	6.959 quarts
'ōmer	omer	1⅔ kabs	2.087 quarts
'issārôn	tenth part (of ephah)		
qabh			1.159 quarts

b. LIQUID MEASURES

<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>RSV</i>	<i>Equivalence</i>	<i>U.S. Measures</i>
kōr	measure, cor	10 baths	60.738 gallons
bath	bath	6 hins	6.073 gallons
hin	hin	3 kabs	1.012 gallons
qabh	kab	4 logs	1.349 quarts
lōgh	log		0.674 pint

4. MEASURES OF CAPACITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

<i>Greek</i>	<i>RSV</i>	<i>Equivalence</i>	<i>U.S. Measures</i>
<i>batos</i>	measure	(Hebrew) bath	
<i>koros</i>	measure	(Hebrew) kōr	see Table 3
<i>saton</i>	measure	(Hebrew) še'āh	
<i>metrētēs</i>	measure		10.3 gallons
<i>choinix</i>	quart		0.98 dry quart
<i>modios</i>	bushel	(Latin) modius	7.68 dry quarts
<i>xestēs</i>	pot	(Latin) sextarius	0.96 dry pint, or 1.12 fluid pints

5. HEBREW WEIGHTS

<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>RSV</i>	<i>Equivalence</i>	<i>U.S. Avoirdupois</i>
<i>kikkār</i>	talent	60 minas	75.558 pounds
<i>māneh</i>	mina	50 shekels	20.148 ounces
<i>shéqel</i>	shekel	2 bekas	176.29 grains
<i>béqa'</i>	beka, half a shekel	10 gerahs	88.14 grains
<i>gērāh</i>	gerah		8.81 grains

The practice of weighing unmarked ingots of metal used in commercial transactions prior to the invention of money explains that the names of the units of weight were used later as indications of value, and as names for monetary standards. There is, however, no direct relation between the shekel-weight and the weight of a shekel piece.

6. WEIGHTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

<i>Greek</i>	<i>RSV</i>	<i>Equivalence</i>	<i>U.S. Avoirdupois</i>
<i>talenton</i>	talent	(Hebrew) talent	see Table 5
<i>mna</i>	pound	(Hebrew) mina	see Table 5
<i>litra</i>	pound	(Latin) libra	0.719 pound

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES OF RULERS

- A. **THE UNITED MONARCHY.** The length of Saul's reign is not known; David and Solomon are each said to have ruled for forty years, which is often used as a general and somewhat indefinite number. Their reigns must have fallen between about 1020 and 922 (931) B.C., perhaps as follows:

Saul	1020-1000 B.C.
David	1000-961 (or 1000-965) B.C.
Solomon	961-922 (or 965-931) B.C.

- B. **THE DIVIDED MONARCHY, JUDAH AND ISRAEL.** Problems of the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah often permit only a tentative solution. The following tables present two widely accepted systems of chronology, one developed by W. F. Albright and the other by E. R. Thiele (the dates of the latter's system are enclosed within parentheses). The two columns are arranged so as to indicate the relationships between the two kingdoms, showing who was reigning in Israel when a given king was reigning in Judah, and vice versa.

<i>JUDAH</i>	<i>ISRAEL</i>
Rehoboam — 922 (931)	922 (931)—Jeroboam
Abijam — 915 (913)	
Asa — 913 (911)	
	901 (910) — Nadab
	900 (909) — Baasha
	877 (886) — Elah
	876 (885) — Zimri
	876 (Omri, Tibni 885) — Omri (Omri 880)
Jehoshaphat — 873 (870)	869 (874) — Ahab
	850 (853) — Ahaziah
Jehoram — 849 (848)	849 (852) — Jehoram
Ahaziah — 842 (841)	842 (841) — Jehu

Athaliah — 842 (841)	
Jehoash — 837 (835)	
	815 (814) — Jehoahaz
	801 (798) — Jehoash
Amaziah — 800 (796)	
	786 (782) — Jeroboam II
Uzziah — 783 (767)	
	746 (753) — Zechariah
	745 (752) — Shallum
	745 (752) — Menahem
Jotham — 742 (740)	
	738 (742) — Pekahiah
	737 (740) — Pekah
Ahaz — 735 (732)	
	732 (732) — Hoshea
Hezekiah — 715 (716)	
Manasseh — 687 (687)	
	721 (723/22) — Fall of Samaria
Amon — 642 (642)	
Josiah — 640 (640)	
Jehoahaz — 609 (609)	
Jehoiakim — 609 (609)	
Jehoiachin — 598 (598)	
Zedekiah — 597 (597)	
Fall of Jerusalem — 587 (586)	

C. RULERS DURING NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

ROMAN EMPERORS

27 B.C.—A.D. 14	Augustus
A.D. 14–37	Tiberius
A.D. 37–41	Caligula
A.D. 41–54	Claudius
A.D. 54–68	Nero
A.D. 68–69	Galba; Otho; Vitellius
A.D. 69–79	Vespasian
A.D. 79–81	Titus
A.D. 81–96	Domitian

HERODIAN RULERS

37–4 B.C.	Herod the Great, king of the Jews
4 B.C.—A.D. 6	Archelaus, ethnarch of Judea
4 B.C.—A.D. 39	Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea
4 B.C.—A.D. 34	Philip, tetrarch of Ituraea, Trachonitis, etc.
A.D. 37–44	Herod Agrippa I, from 37 to 44 king over the former tetrarchy of Philip, and from 41 to 44 over Judea, Galilee, and Perea
A.D. 53—about 100	Herod Agrippa II, king over the former tetrarchy of Philip and Lysanias, and from 56 (or 61) over parts of Galilee and Perea

PROCURATORS OF JUDEA AFTER THE REIGN OF ARCHELAUS
TO THE REIGN OF HEROD AGRIPPA I

A.D. 6–8	Coponius
A.D. 9–12	M. Ambivius
A.D. 12–15	Annius Rufus
A.D. 15–26	Valerius Gratus
A.D. 26–36	Pontius Pilate
A.D. 37	Marullus
A.D. 37–41	Herennius Capito

PROCURATORS OF PALESTINE FROM THE REIGN OF HEROD AGRIPPA I
TO THE JEWISH REVOLT

A.D. 44—about 46	Cuspius Fadus
A.D. about 46–48	Tiberius Alexander
A.D. 48–52	Ventidius Cumanus
A.D. 52–60	M. Antonius Felix
A.D. 60–62	Porcius Festus
A.D. 62–64	Clodius Albinus
A.D. 64–66	Gessius Florus

ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE:

THE TYNDALE-KING JAMES TRADITION

Prior to the sixteenth century, translations of the Bible into English were made from the Latin Vulgate instead of from the Hebrew or Greek, and were recorded only in manuscript copies.

To the Anglo-Saxon period belong the paraphrases of the Biblical narrative put into verse by Caedmon, herdsman for the abbey at Whitby (about A.D. 670); a version of the Psalms attributed to Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne (640-709); a translation of the Gospel of John by the Venerable Bede (d. 735); portions of Exodus and the Acts of the Apostles, and some of the Psalms, by King Alfred (849-901); and a translation of the Heptateuch (Genesis through Judges) by Aelfric, abbot of Eynsham (955-1020). Four complete manuscripts and five fragmentary manuscripts remain of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels; these date from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. The famous Lindisfarne Gospels and the Rushworth Gospels are Latin manuscripts written toward the close of the seventh century, with interlinear Anglo-Saxon glosses (translations) inserted three centuries later. There were many Anglo-Saxon Psalters, with the Latin text and an interlinear Anglo-Saxon gloss.

To the Middle English period (1150-1500) belong the Ormulum, a metrical paraphrase of the Gospels, with interspersed moralizations; the Psalter of Richard Rolle (d. 1349), a prose version with commentary; and a prose version of the Psalms which has been attributed to William of Shoreham (about 1270-1350).

The first English versions of the entire Bible were the two associated with the work of John Wyclif, made by translation from the Latin Vulgate between 1380 and 1397. They were copied by hand, and there remain some one hundred and eighty manuscripts, mostly of the second version.

We do not know what part of the work upon the first version was done by Wyclif himself. But that is of no consequence; he inspired it all, including the making of the second version after his death in 1384. Both versions were made by scholars who were his immediate associates. Nicholas Hereford was

largely responsible for the first version, which was completed before Wyclif's death. John Purvey, Wyclif's secretary, was responsible for the second version, which was completed by 1397.

Five hundred years earlier, King Alfred had written that he translated the Latin "hwilum word be worde, hwilum andgit of andgite"—that is, "sometimes word for word, sometimes meaning for meaning."

The first version of the Wyclif Bible was a careful literal translation of the Latin Vulgate, with the English words following the order of the Latin words as closely as possible. Purvey gives a striking example of the mischief that may thus be wrought. In 1 Sam. 2.10 the Latin has *Dominum formidabunt adversarii eius*, which the first version renders, "The Lord shulen drede the adversaries of hym." This follows the Latin word order, but ignores the Latin inflections which show that "adversaries" is the subject of the verb, that the verb for "shall dread" is plural, and that "the Lord" is its object. Purvey changes the translation to read, "Adversaries of the Lord shulen drede hym."

In the "General Prologue" to the second version Purvey states that it is best "to translate after the sentence and not only after the words, so that the sentence be as open, or opener, in English as in Latin"—that is, so that the meaning be as clear, or clearer.

The sixteenth century brought the Bible in English to the common people as a printed book. Beginning with the first of Tyndale's translations in 1526, there appeared in rapid succession eight English versions of the Bible, culminating in the King James Version published in 1611.

The first English version of the Scriptures to be made by direct translation from the Hebrew and Greek was the work of William Tyndale. His New Testament, 1526, was followed by his translation of the Pentateuch in 1530 and of Jonah in 1531. In 1534 he issued a revision of his translation of the New Testament, and in 1535 *The New Testament yet once again corrected by William Tyndale*. These became the basis of all later revisions and the main source

of the authorized versions of the New Testament in English.

Tyndale was bitterly opposed. He was accused of perverting the meaning of the Scriptures, and his New Testaments were ordered to be burned as "untrue translations," intended "for the advancement and setting forth of Luther's abominable heresies." He was finally betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and in October 1536, was executed and burned at the stake.

In 1535 appeared an English translation of the Bible by Miles Coverdale. This was the first complete Bible to be printed in English. It was not a direct translation from the original languages, but was based upon two Latin versions and upon the translations by Tyndale into English, and by Luther and Zwingli into German.

In 1537 a folio volume was published entitled *The Bible, which is all the Holy Scriptures, in which are containeyd the Olde and Newe Testaments, truely and purely translated into Englysh, by Thomas Matthew*. "Thomas Matthew" was a pseudonym adopted by John Rogers, a friend of Tyndale, who took Tyndale's manuscript translations of the books of the Old Testament from Joshua to Second Chronicles, together with Tyndale's printed translations of the Pentateuch and the New Testament, and published them in this one volume, which he completed by adding Coverdale's version of the rest of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha.

In 1539 Richard Taverner, a layman and a lawyer, clerk of the signet to the king, published a revision of Matthew's Bible, one edition of which was issued in parts in order that people who could not afford to purchase the whole Bible might buy one or more parts. He was a good Greek scholar, and made some changes in the translation of the New Testament which have been kept in later versions.

Meanwhile at Paris, in early 1538, Miles Coverdale had begun a new revision of Matthew's Bible, for which he had been commissioned by Sir Thomas Cromwell, Secretary to King Henry VIII, and Vicar General. The Great Bible, as this was called, was published at London in April 1539. It was the first authorized English version, and a copy was ordered to be placed in every church.

Under Queen Mary the printing of the English Bible ceased and its use in the churches was forbidden. Many English citizens sought refuge on the Continent, and a group of these at Geneva undertook the revision of the English Bible. The Geneva version appeared in

1560. It was set in Roman type instead of the old blackface, and it was a book easy to handle, instead of an unwieldy folio. It was the first English version to use numbered verses, each set off as a separate paragraph.

The Geneva Bible was never authorized, but it became at once the people's book, the household Bible of the English-speaking nations, and it held this place for three-quarters of a century. It was the Bible used by Shakespeare and John Bunyan; and it was the Bible of the Puritans who settled New England. Between 1560 and 1644 at least one hundred and forty editions of the Geneva Bible or New Testament were printed, and it lasted longer in competition with the King James Version than any other English version.

Queen Elizabeth renewed the injunction that a copy of "the whole Bible of the largest volume in English" be placed in every church, and encouraged its reading. Because not enough copies of the Great Bible were available, Archbishop Parker proposed that the bishops themselves make a new revision of the English Bible. The resulting version, known as the Bishops' Bible, was published in 1568. It was authorized by Convocation, and its possession enjoined upon the churches. In 1572 another edition was published, with considerable revision of the New Testament. This revised edition, reprinted in 1602, became the basis of the revision under King James.

In 1582 an English translation of the New Testament was published at Rheims, made from the Latin by Roman Catholic scholars led by Gregory Martin, who had been trained at Oxford University. A similar translation was made of the Old Testament, but not published until 1609. The distinctive characteristic of the Rhemish version of the New Testament is the closeness with which it adheres to the Latin.

On February 10, 1604, after a conference "for hearing and for the determining things pretended to be amiss in the church," King James I ordained: "That a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all churches of England in time of divine service." He appointed fifty-four men as translators, forty-eight of whom are named in the records that have come down to us. They worked in six companies, to each of which was assigned a section of the Bible. Two companies met at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster.

It was provided that each company would

consider the work of each other company, and that differences would be resolved by correspondence if possible, and if not, be referred to the general meeting at the end. This was a meeting at London of a committee of six, made up of two representatives from the companies at each of the three centers, which devoted nine months to bringing together and finally editing the work. It was then seen through the press by Dr. Thomas Bilson, bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Myles Smith, of Oxford University; and Smith wrote an extended and informative preface, entitled "The Translators to the Reader." This version of the Bible, with a dedication to King James, was published in 1611.

It is a strange fact that no evidence has yet been found that the King James Version was ever authorized in the sense of being publicly sanctioned by Convocation or by Parliament. But it did not need that. Bishop Westcott, writing one hundred years ago, said: "From the middle of the seventeenth century, the King's Bible has been the acknowledged Bible of the English-speaking nations throughout the world simply because it is the best. A revision which embodied the ripe fruits of nearly a century of labour, and appealed to the religious instinct of a great Christian people, gained by its own internal character a vital authority which could never have been secured by any edict of sovereign rulers."

To this may be added the verdict of Sir Frederic Kenyon: "It is the simple truth that, as literature, the English Authorized Version is superior to the original Greek. It was the good fortune of the English nation that its Bible was produced at a time when the genius of the language for noble prose was at its height, and when a natural sense of style was not infected by self-conscious scholarship. The beauty of the language commended the teaching of the sacred books and made them dear to the heart of the people, while it made an indelible and enduring impression alike on literature and on popular speech" (*The Story of the Bible*, London, 1936).

An outstanding merit of the King James Version is the music of its cadences. The translators were men experienced in the public reading of the Scriptures and in the conduct of public worship. Their choice of the final wording of a passage was often determined by a marvelously sure instinct for what would sound well when read aloud. Take as an example the successive translations of Pr.3.17, part of a discourse in praise of wisdom, where Coverdale, the Great Bible, and the Bishops' Bible agree in reading: "Her wayes are pleas-

ant wayes and all her paths are peaceable."

The Geneva Bible has: "Her wayes are wayes of pleasure and all her paths prosperitie."

The King James Version gives to the verse a perfect melody: "Her wayes are wayes of pleasantnesse, and all her pathes are peace."

The English Bible owes more to William Tyndale than to any other man, not only because he was the first to translate the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek, but because the basic structure of his translation has endured through all subsequent changes. It has been estimated that about sixty per cent of the text of the English Bible achieved its final literary form before the King James Version appeared, and that in the King James Version at least one-third of the New Testament is worded exactly as in Tyndale's New Testament, while the sentences of the remaining two-thirds follow the general pattern of the underlying structure of Tyndale's New Testament.

Among the hundreds of phrases and sentences which the King James translators owed to Tyndale, and which have been kept by revisers of our own time, are: "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt.6.24); "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow" (Mt.6.28); "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt.18.20); "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20.35); "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph.3.8); "out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet.2.9).

To Coverdale and the Great Bible we owe such phrases as "till heaven and earth pass away" (Mt.5.18); "none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself" (Rom.14.7); "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15.54); "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal.6.14).

From Taverner come these readings: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt.16.24); "according to thy word" (Lk. 2.29); "a certain creditor" (7.41); "Master, it is good for us to be here" (9.33); "he would have given thee living water" (Jn.4.10).

From the Geneva Bible come such phrases as: "his word was with authority" (Lk.4.32); "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8.37); "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2.16); "all the fulness of God" (Eph.3.19); "the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb.4.13); "so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb.12.1).

Among the phrases which appeared first in

the Bishops' Bible are "persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Mt.5.10); "faithless and perverse generation" (Mt.17.17); "overcome evil with good" (Rom.12.21); "was made in the likeness of men" (Phil.2.70); "the power of his resurrection" (Phil.3.10).

We owe to the Rheims Version such expressions as "Why, what evil has he done?" (Mt.27.23); "owe me no one anything" (Rom.13.8); "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor.5.18); "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil.1.21).

For two and a half centuries the King James Version maintained its place as the Authorized Version of the English-speaking peoples, without any serious consideration of its revision. But in the 1850's a movement toward revision began to gather strength, and in 1870 the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury appointed a Committee to undertake it. The Revised Version of the New Testament was published in 1881, of the Old Testament in 1885, and of the Apocrypha in 1895. The American Standard Version, a variant edition containing the renderings preferred by the American scholars who had cooperated in the work of revision, was published in 1901.

In 1928 the copyright of the American Standard Version was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education, and thus passed into the ownership of the churches of the United States and Canada which were associated in this Council through their boards of education and publication. The Council appointed a committee of scholars to have charge of the text of the American Standard Version and to undertake inquiry as to whether further revision was necessary. After more than two years of study and experimental work, this committee decided that there was need for a thorough revision of the version of 1901, which would stay as close to the Tynedale-King James tradition as it could in the light of present knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek texts and their meaning on the one hand, and present usage of English on the other.

In 1937 the revision was authorized by vote of the Council, which directed that the resulting version should "embody the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and express this meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James Version a supreme place in English literature."

The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published in 1946, of the Old Testament in 1952, and of the Apocrypha in

1957. The publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was authorized in 1951 by vote of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

The revised versions of 1881-1901 made permanent advances in their recognition of the principle that Hebrew poetry is to be translated as poetry, in characteristic parallelism, and in their giving due weight to the text of the ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament which had been discovered since 1611.

But the Revised New Testament of 1881, said Charles H. Spurgeon, the great London preacher, was "strong in Greek, weak in English." The revisers were literalists, especially in the New Testament. Their ideal of translation was a meticulous word-for-word reproduction of the Greek text in English words, using the same English word for a given Greek word whenever possible, leaving no Greek word without translation into a correspondent English word, following the order of the Greek words rather than the order natural to English, and attempting to translate the tenses and the definite article with a precision alien to English idioms. The result is that the Revised Version and the American Standard Version are distinctly "translation English."

The problem of the archaic language of the King James Version was ineffectively handled by the revisers, who changed some of the misleading words but actually increased the use of other archaic terms, such as *aforetime*, *haply*, *holden*, *howbeit*, *would fain*, *must needs*, *peradventure*. Where the King James Version reads, "this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Th.5.18), the 1881-1901 revisers changed it to "this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward" (so also in Rom.8.18, Gal.5.10, Col.1.25). A full account of archaic words and obsolete meanings in the King James Version and the revised versions of 1881-1901 is given in *The Bible Word Book*, by Ronald Bridges and Luther A. Weigle.

It is one of the ironies of history that the King James Version remained unrevised for two hundred and sixty years, then was revised with the utmost care, but that almost immediately there began the period which Sir Frederic Kenyon has called the Age of Discoveries, since it "has seen discovery after discovery widening our knowledge of the Bible text and its early history, and testing the results at which the scholars of 1881 had arrived by evidence with which they were totally unacquainted." (For a description of some of these discoveries, see pp. xii, xiii, 1528 above.)

The Revised Standard Version has taken full account of the new knowledge of the history, geography, religions, and cultures of Bible lands, and of the rich new resources for understanding the vocabulary, grammar, and idioms of the Biblical and related languages. It also breaks away from the literalism and mechanical exactitude of the revisions of 1881–1901, and returns to the basic structure and more natural cadence of the Tyndale-King James tradition. The review of the Revised Standard Version in *The Scotsman* of Edinburgh concluded with the statement: “In general it may be claimed, whatever criticism may be directed to this or that minor detail of text or diction, that here we have the most significant and adequate of existing revisions, the one most tenacious in its style and form of the tradition of the English Bible.”

Paraphrases and new translations, usually of the New Testament, have appeared from time to time, such as those by Henry Ham-

mond, 1653; Richard Baxter, 1685; Daniel Mace, 1729; Edward Harwood, 1768; Andrews Norton, 1855; Leicester Sawyer, 1858. A group of scholars produced *The Twentieth Century New Testament*, 1898–1901; thereafter have come new translations by R. F. Weymouth, 1903; James Moffatt, 1913; Edgar J. Goodspeed, 1923; J. B. Phillips, 1947–1958; and *The New English Bible: New Testament*, 1961. Moffatt’s translation of the Old Testament appeared in 1924; and a translation of the Old Testament by J. M. Powis Smith and other scholars (1927) was published with the Goodspeed New Testament as *The Bible: An American Translation*. Work upon the translation of the Old Testament for *The New English Bible* is scheduled for completion in the late 1960’s. None of these translations, each new and “modern” in its time, has come within the scope of this chapter, which is concerned with the development of the Tyndale-King James tradition.

INDEX TO THE ANNOTATIONS

The following index lists important names, institutions, and ideas which are mentioned in the annotations. In order to gain the fullest information, the Scriptural reference as well as the annotation itself should be read, and all cross references should be consulted.

- Abaddon, Job 26.6; Rev.9.11
 Abba, Rom.8.15
 Abyss, the, Lk.8.31
 Acrostic, Pss.9-10; 25; 34; 37; 112; 119; 145; Intro. to Lam., p. 991; Nah.1.2-11
 Agriculture, Gen.3.17-19; 4.1-26; 9.20; 47.13-26
 Alliances, foreign, 2 Kg.20.16-19; Ezek.23.5-10
 Alpha and Omega, Rev.1.8
 Altar, Ex.20.24-26; 27.1-8; Ezek.43.13-26
 Altar, horns of the, 1 Kg.1.49-53
 Amen-em-ope, Pr.22.17-24.22
 Amorites, Gen.10.15-20; Jos.3.10; 1 Sam.7.13-14
 Angel, Gen.16.7; 32.1-2; Jg.2.1; 2 Sam.24.16; Job 33.23-28; Is.37.36; Dan.10.12-13; Acts 12.15; 1 Cor.11.10; Heb.1.14; Rev.1.20
 Anoint, 1 Sam.10.1; Ps. 2.2; see also Messiah
 Antichrist, 1 Jn.2.18; Rev.11.7; 19:19-21
 Antiochus Epiphanes, Dan.7.4-8; 8.9-14, 23-25; 11.21-45; Jn.10.22
 Apocalypse, Isaiah, Is.24-27
 Apocalypticism, Ezek.38.1-39.29; Intro. to Dan., p. 1067
 Apocrypha, pp. xxiv, 1527
 Apollos, Acts 18.24-28
 Apostasy, Num.25.1-12; Jg.2.6-3.6; 1 Kg.12.25-33; 14.1-16; 2 Kg.17.1-41; Ps. 78; Jer.2.1-37; Ezek.20.1-44; 23.1-4; Hos.4.1-8.14; 1 Tim.4.1-16
 Apostles, the twelve, Lk.6.12-16
 Aramaic, 2 Kg.18.26; Est.1.22; Is.36.11; Jer.10.11; 44.1; Intro. to Dan., p. 1067; p. 1168; Rom.8.15; pp. 1520, 1526
 Archaeology, pp. 1519-20, 1525
 Archelaus, Mt.2.22
 Ark (of the Covenant), Ex.25.10-22; 33.8-9; Num. 10.33-36; Dt.10.1-3.8; Jos.3.3; 1 Sam.3.3; 2 Sam.6.1-15; Ps. 132; Jer.3.16-17; p. 1521
 Armageddon, Rev.16.16
 Ascension of Christ, Jn.6.62-63; Acts 1.6-11
 Asherah, Jg.6.25; 1 Kg.14.15; Jer.2.20-28; Ezek.6.1-14; p. 1520
 Asherim, Ex.34.13; 1 Kg.14.15
 Assyrians, p. 1525
 Atbash, Jer.25.26
 Athens, Paul at, Acts 17.16-34
 Atonement, Ex.29.35-37; 32.30; Lev.1.4; Heb.9.11-10.18
 Atonement, Day of, Lev.16.1-34
 Baal, 2 Sam.2.8; 1 Kg.17.1; 18.17-19; 2 Kg.1.2-5; Jer. 9.13-16; Hos.2.2-13, 14-23
 Baal-zebul, 2 Kg.1.2-5; see also Beelzebul
 Ban, Jos.6.17; 7.1-5; 1 Sam.15.3; 1 Kg.20.42
 Baptism with the Holy Spirit, Mk.1.8
 Beatitudes, Mt.5.3-12; Rev.1.3
 Beelzebul, Mk.3.22; see also Baal-zebul
 Belial, 2 Cor.6.15
 Benediction, Aaronic, Num.6.22-27
 Benediction, apostolic, 2 Cor.13.14
 Benedictus, the, Lk.1.67-79
 "Bind or loose," the expression, Mt.16.19
 Birthright, Gen.25.31-34; Dt.21.15-17; see also First-born, Inheritance
 Bishops, qualifications of, 1 Tim.3.1-7; Tit.1.5-7
 Blessing, Gen.27.1-45; 48.13-14; 49.1-28; Dt.28.3-6; Pss.1.1; 36.5-9; Jl.3.18-21
 Blood, Gen.4.10-11; 9.3-6; 37.22; Ex.12.7; 24.8; Hab. 2.6-20
 Blood revenge, Gen.4.13-14; Lev.25.25; Num.35.1-34; Jos.20.3; Is.41.14-16
 Book of the Law, Jos.1.8; 2 Kg.22.8-10; Neh.8.1
 Branch, Is.4.2; Jer.23.1-8; Zech.3.8; 6.12
 Burnt offerings, Lev.1.1-17; 1 Sam.7.9
 Calendar of feasts, Ex.23.10-19; 34.18-26; Lev.23.1-44; Ezek.45.18-25
 Calves, gold, Ex.32.2-3; 1 Kg.12.25-33
 Camel and eye of needle, Mk.10.25
 Canaanites, Jos.3.10; 2 Sam.5.6-9; Ezek.16.1-7; p. 1519
 Canon of the New Testament, pp. 1169-70
 Canon of the Old Testament, pp. xxii-xxiv
 Celibacy, Mt.19.11-12
 Census, Num.1.1-54; 26.1-65; 2 Sam.24.1-25
 Cephas, Mt.16.18
 Cereal offerings, Lev.2.1-16; Num.5.15
 Cherethites and Pelethites, 2 Sam.8.18; 2 Kg.11.4; Ezek. 25.15-17
 Cherubim, Gen.3.24; 1 Sam.4.3-4; Ps.18.10; Ezek.1.5, 26-28; p. 1521
 Childlikeness, Mt.18.3
 Christ, Mt.1.16
 Christ as high priest, Heb.4.14-5.14
 Christ, pre-existence of, Jn.1.1-2; 2 Cor.8.9; Phil.2.6; Col.1.16; Heb.1.1-4
 Christ, sacrifice of, Heb.9.11-10.18
 Christ, second coming of, Phil.1.6; 1 Th.4.13-5.11
 Christ, to be in, Rom.8.2; Gal.2.20
 Christian growth, Heb.6.1-20
 Christian life, the, Eph.4.1-6.20; Phil.3.12-21
 Christian, the name, Acts 11.26
 Christian virtues, 2 Pet.1.5
 Church, Gal.1.13; Eph.1.22-23
 Circumcision, Gen.17.1-27; Dt.10.16; Jos.5.2-12; 1 Sam. 14.6
 Clean and unclean, Lev.11.1-47; 15.1-32; Num.19.1-22; 31.19-24; Dt.14.3-21; 2 Sam.11.4; Ezek.36.26
 Cleansing of the temple, Jesus', Jn.2.13-25
 Coins, Roman, Lk.12.59
 Concubine, 2 Sam.3.6-11; 5.13-16; 16.20-23
 Confession of faith, 1 Tim.6.12
 Corban, Mk.7.11
 Cornelius, conversion of, Acts 10.1-48
 Coronation, Pss. 2; 72; 101; 110; Zech.6.9-15
 Cosmogony, Gen.1.2, 6-8; 7.11; Job 26.7; 38.4-7; Pr. 3.19-20; 8.28
 Covenant, Gen.9.1-19; 15.1-21; 17.1-27; Ex.6.4; 19.1-25; 24.1-18; 34.1-35; Lev.3.1-17; Dt.4.16-18; 5.2-3; 27.1-26; 29.1-30.20; 31.9-13; Jg.9.4; 2 Kg.23.2; Is. 5.7; 48.18-19; Jer.11.1-17; 34.13-22; Ezek.16.1-14; Hos.1.8-9; pp. 1167, 1515, 1520-22
 Covenant Code, Ex.20.22-23.33
 Covenant, new, Jer.31.23-40; 32.16-44; Ezek.16.53-63; 34.25-31; Hos.2.14-23; Intro. to N.T., p. 1167; 2 Cor.3.4-18; Heb.10.16-17; p. 1515
 Covenant with David, Ps.89.3-4, 19-37; Is.55.3-5
 Creation, Gen.1.1-2.4a; 2.4b-3.24; Pss.74.12-17; 104; Is. 51.3; Ezek.28.11-19
 Cross, the, Mt.10.38
 Cubit, Ezek.40.5; Mt.6.27; p. 1530
 Cult prostitute, Gen.38.15; Dt.23.17-18; 1 Kg.22.38; Ezek.16.15-22
 Curse, Gen.27.4; Ex.21.17; Num.22.6; Dt.27.15-26; 28.1-68; Pss. 58; 109.6-29; Zech.5.3
 Dagon, Jg.16.23; 1 Sam.5.2
 Dan'el, Ezek.14.12-23; 28.1-10
 David, pp. 1523-24

Index to the Annotations

- Day of the Lord, Is.2.11; 13.6-16; 22.5-8a; Ezek.30.1-5; Jl.2.28-3.21; Am.5.18-20; Ob.15-18; Zeph.1.14-18; Zech.12.1-14.21; 2 Th.2.1-12; 2 Pet.3.1-18
- Deacon, qualifications of a, 1 Tim.3.8-13
- Deaconess, Rom.16.1
- Dead Sea Scrolls, p. xxii; Is.37.27-28; 38.8; Dan.4.25; Mt.3.7; Lk.16.8; Acts 1.5; pp. 1527-28
- Death, Gen.3.19; Mt.9.24; see also Sheol
- Death of the Christian, 2 Cor.5.1-10
- Death, shadow of, Ps.23.4
- Decapolis, Mk.5.20
- Dedication, feast of, Jn.10.22
- Deep, the, Gen.1.2; 7.11; Job 28.14; Ezek.31.4
- Demoniacs, Mt.4.24
- Demons, Mt.12.22-24; Lk.4.33
- Deuteronomie Code, Intro. to Dt., p. 214; Dt.5.1-26.19; 28.1-68; 2 Kg.22.8-10; p. 1526
- Devil, Mt.4.1; see also Satan
- Dietary Practices, Gen.32.32; Lev.11.1-47; Dan.1.8; Hos.9.4; Zech.9.7; Acts 15.20-22; 1 Cor.8.1-13
- Disciples, Lk.6.13
- Dives, the name, Lk.16.19
- Divination, Gen.44.15; Num.22.5-20; 23.1-6; 24.14; Dt.18.15-22; 1 Sam.28.9; Ezek.13.1-16; 21.18-24; Dan.2.1-49; see also Dream
- Divorce, Dt.24.1-4; Ezra 10.2; Mal.2.10-16; Mt.5.31-32
- Dragon, Job 7.12; 41.1-34; Is.27.1; 51.9-11; Ezek.29.1-16; 31.4; 32.1-16; Rev.12.3; see also Leviathan, Rahab
- Dream, Gen.28.11; 37.5-11; 40.1-23; Dt.13.1; Jer.23.23-32; Dan.2.2, 4-11; 4.6
- Eden, Gen.2.8-9; Is.51.3; Ezek.28.11-19
- Elders, Christian, Acts 14.23
- Election of Israel, Gen.12.1-3; Ex.4.22; Dt.7.7-8; Am. 3.1-15; 9.7-10
- Ephod, Ex.28.6-12; Jg.17.5; 1 Sam.2.18; 14.3; 21.9
- Essenes, Mt.3.7; Acts 2.44; 4.11; Intro. to Col., p. 1426
- Eternal life, 1 Jn.5.11-12
- Exile, the, 2 Kg.24.10-17; 25.8-12, 27-30; 1 Chr.5.23-26; Jer.29.1-32; 52.28-30; Ezek.12.1-20
- Exodus, the, Ex.12.29-50; Dt.1.1-3.29; Is.43.16-17; Hos.2.14; pp. 1521-22
- Expiation, Rom.3.25
- Faith, Gen.12.4; 22.1-19; Job 42.5; Ps.34.7-22; Is.30.15-17; Hab.2.4; Intro. to Jas., p. 1467
- Fasting, Mt.9.15
- Father (God), Hos.11.1; Mal.2.10
- Fire (from God), Gen.15.17-18; Ex.3.2; 13.21-22; 19.16-19; Num.11.1; 1 Kg.18.38; 2 Kg.1.9-16; 2.11; 1 Chr. 21.26; Is.4.5; see also Theophany
- First-born, Ex.4.22; 13.1-16; Dt.21.15-17
- Fool, Ps.14.1; Ec.9.18
- Forgiveness, Mt.18.21-22
- Fulness of God, the, Col.1.19
- Gamaliel, Acts 5.34
- Gate (as center of community life and court of justice), Jos.20.4; Ru.4.1; Pr.22.22; p. 1520
- Gates of Jerusalem, 2 Kg.14.13; Jer.31.38-40; Ezek. 10.19; 40.6-16; 44.1-5; 48.30-35
- Gehenna, Rev.19.20
- Genealogy, Jesus', Mt.1.1-17; Lk.3.23-38
- Geography of Bible lands, pp. 1517-19
- Glory (of God), Ex.16.6-7; 40.34-38; Pss. 8; 19.1-6; 24.8-10; Is.48.9-10; Ezek.10.3-4; 43.1-12
- Gnosticism, 1 Tim.4.3-5; 6.20; 1 Jn.2.22-23; Intro. to 1 Jn., p. 1482
- God Almighty, Gen.17.1
- Gods, pagan
- Ashtaroth, Jg.2.13; 2 Sam.7.3-4
- Bel, Is.46.1-4
- Chemosh, Num.21.29; Jg.11.24
- Day Star and Dawn, Is.14.12-15
- Hadad-rimmon, Zech.12.11
- Ishtar, Jer.44.15-28
- Marduk, Jer.50.2-3
- Milcom, 2 Sam.12.30
- Nabu, Is.46.1-4
- Sakkuth and Kaiwan, Am.5.26
- Tamuzz, Is.17.9-11; Ezek.8.14-18; Dan.11.36-39
- see also Asherah, Baal, Dagon
- Golden Rule, the, Mt.7.12
- Good and evil, Gen.2.9; Is.7.15
- Grace, Job 33.23-28; Is.55.6-9; Eph.2.5; 2 Th.1.2
- Great Commandment, Lev.19.17-18; Dt.6.4-5; 10.19; Mt.22.34-40
- Greek language, the, pp. xii-xiii, 1168
- Guilt offering, Lev.5.14-6.7; 1 Sam.6.3
- Hallel, Egyptian, Ps. 113
- Hallelujah, Pss. 105; 113; 146
- Harem, 2 Sam.5.13-16; 1 Kg.2.13-25; Est.2.3,9
- Healing, Pss. 30; 32; 38; 39; 41; 42-43; 51; 88; 102; 103; 116
- Heaven, joy of, Rev.22.4
- Heaven, the third, 2 Cor. 12.2
- Heavenly places, Eph.1.3
- Hebrews, origins of the, Gen.10.21-31; Ex.1.15; 1 Sam. 4.6; 14.21; p. 1519
- Hell, Mt.18.7-9
- Herod Agrippa I, Acts 12.1
- Herod Agrippa II, Acts 25.13
- Herod Antipas, Lk.3.1
- Herod the Great, Lk.1.5
- Herodians, Mk.3.6
- High places, 1 Kg.3.1-2; 2 Kg.23.4-14; Ezek.6.1-14; p. 1520
- Hittites, Gen.10.15-20; 23.3; 1 Sam.26.5-6; Ezek.16.1-7
- Holiness, Ex.19.12; Lev.6.27-28; 19.1-37
- Holiness Code, Lev.17.1-26.46
- Holy City, Pss.46.4-7; 87.1-6
- Holy One, Is.1.4
- Holy Spirit, as Counselor, Jn.14.16; 16.4b-11
- Holy War, Ex.17.14; Num.31.9-12; Dt.3.22; 20.1-20; 1 Sam.15.3
- Horites (Hurrians), Gen.36.20; p. 1519
- Horn of salvation, Lk.1.69
- Hosanna, Ps.118.25; Mt.21.9
- Hospitality, Christian, Heb.13.2
- Hosts, Lord of, 1 Sam.1.3
- House-churches, Phil.2
- Hyksos, p. 1521
- Idolatry, Dt.12.32-13.18; Jg.17.1-6; 1 Sam.7.3-4; Job 12.6; Is.44.9-20; 57.1-13; Jer.10.1-16; 19.3-15; Ezek. 8.16-18; 14.1-11; Hos.13.1-3; Zeph.1.2-6
- Image of God, Gen.1.26; 5.3; 9.3-6
- Immanuel, Is.7.10-17
- Immorality, 1 Cor.6.16
- "In Christ," Rom.8.2; Gal.2.20
- Inheritance, Gen.25.31-34; Lev.25.10,23; Num.27.1-11; Dt.21.15-17; 1 Kg.21.1-4; see also Birthright
- Interest, Ex.22.25; Dt.23.19-20; Neh.5.7-10; Ps.15.5
- Iron Age, 1 Sam.13.19-22
- Jachin and Boaz, 1 Kg.7.15-22
- Jerusalem, fall of, 2 Kg.24.1-17; 24.20b-25.7; Mt.24.1; p. 1526
- Jerusalem, new, Is.60.1-22; 65.24-25; Ezek.48.30-35
- Jesus, baptism of, Mt.3.13-17
- Jesus, birth of, Mt.1.18; Lk.2.1-40
- Jesus, brothers and sisters of, Mk.6.3
- Jesus, high priestly prayer of, Jn.17.1-26
- Jesus, mission of, Mt.15.24
- Jesus, name of, Mt.1.21
- Jesus, temptation of, Mt.4.1-11
- John the Baptist, Mt.3.1-12
- Jubilee, Lev.25.8-24
- Judas, death of, Mt.27.3-10; Acts 1.16-20
- Judges, Jg.2.16; 10.1-5
- Judgment, divine, 2 Th.1.5-12
- Judgment, Last, Dan.7.9-14; Jl.3.1-3; Mt.25.31-46; Rev.20.11-15
- Kingdom of God, Pss. 93; 145.10-13a; Dan.2.36-45; 7.11-14; Mt.4.17
- Kingdom of heaven, Mt.4.17
- Kingship of God, 1 Sam.4.3-4; Pss.93; 95-100; Is.43.14-15
- Kiss, the holy, Rom.16.16
- Knowledge, Pr.1.7; Is.1.2-3; Jer.9.23-24; Hos.4.1-3
- Knowledge, tree of, Gen.2.9

- Laments of Jeremiah, Jer.11.18-12.6; 15.10-21; 17.14-18; 18.18-23; 20.7-13, 14-18
 Language of the New Testament, the, pp. xii-xiii, 1168
 Languages of the Old Testament, the, pp. x-xi, xxii
 Languages, origins of, Gen.11.1-9
 Last supper, the, Mt.26.17-29
 Law, Ex.20.22-23.33; Intro. to Lev., p. 122; Lev.1.1; 17.1-16; Intro. to Dt., p. 214; Dt.6.8-9; Intro. to Ezra, p. 573; Neh.8.1-12; Pss.19.7-14; 119; Is.1.10; Jer.8.8-9; see also Covenant Code, Deuteronomical Code, Holiness Code, Priestly Code, Clean and unclean, Dietary Practices.
 Law, purpose of the Mosaic, Gal.3.19-29
 Lawyer, Lk.11.45
 Laying on of hands, the, 1 Tim.4.14
 Lazarus, the raising of, Jn.11.1-57
 Legion, a Roman, Mk.5.9
 Leprosy, Lev.13.1-59; 14.1-32; 2 Kg.5.1-27; 2 Chr.26.16-20; Mt.8.2-4
 Leviathan, Job 3.8; 40.15-24; 41.1-34; Pss.74.12-17; 104.26; Is.27.1
 Levirate marriage, Gen.38.8; Dt.25.5-10; Ru.3.9, 12
 Levites, Num.3.1-51; 8.1-26; 18.1-32; Dt.14.27-29; 18.1-22; 1 Chr.6.1-81; 23.1-32
 Liberty, Christian, Gal.5.1-26
 Life, book of, Ex.32.32-34; Ps.40.7; Mal.3.16; Rev.3.5
 Life, tree of, Gen.2.9; 3.22; Pr.3.18; 11.30; Ezek.31.7-18; Rev.22.2
 Lilith, Is.34.13-15
 Little ones, Mt.18.6
 Lord's Prayer, the, Mt.6.9-13
 Lord's Supper, the, 1 Cor.11.17-34
 Lots, Jg.18.5; 1 Sam.14.36-37; Neh.10.34; Pr.16.33; see also Urim and Thummim
 Love, Lev.19.17-18; Dt.6.4-5; Js.54.8; Hos.3.1; 4.1-3; Am.4.6-12; Jon.4.11; Mal.1.2-5; 1 Cor.13.13; 1 Jn.4.7-21; see also Steadfast love
 Love, Christian, 1 Cor.13.1-13
 Magic, Gen.41.8; Ex.4.1-9; Ezek.13.17-23
 Magnificat, the, Lk.1.46-55
 Man, nature of, Gen.1.26-28; 2.7, 15-17; Intro. to Job, p. 613; Job 14.1; Pss. 8; 90; 103.6-18; Intro. to Ec., p. 805; Is.40.6-8; 51.12-14; Mal.2.10; 1 Th.5.23
 Manna, Ex.16.14; Ps.78.25
 Man of lawlessness, the, 2 Th.2.6
 Manuscripts of the New Testament, pp. xii, 1168-9
 Manuscripts of the Old Testament, pp. x-xi, xxii
 Maranatha, 1 Cor.16.22
 Marriage, Gen.2.24-25; 29.23-25; 31.43; 38.8; Jg.15.1; Mal.2.14-16; see also Levirate marriage
 Marriage, mixed, Ezra 9.1-15; 10.2
 Martha and Mary, Lk.10.38-42
 Mary Magdalene, Lk.8.2
 Melchizedek, the order of, Heb.5.6
 Messenger of the Lord, Mal.2.17-3.5; 4.4-6
 Messiah, 1 Sam.10.1; 1 Chr.5.1-10; Pss.2.2; 110.1; Is.9.2-7; 11.1-9; 45.1-7; 55.3-5; Mic.5.2-6; Hag.2.20-23; Zech.3.8; 6.9-15; 9.9-10; Mt.11.4-5; see also Christ
 Messianic banquet, Lk.12.37; Rev.3.20
 Messiahship, Jesus', Jn.7.25-31
 Michael, the archangel, Dan.10.12-13; Jude 9-10; Rev.12.7
 Millennium, the, Rev.20.2
 Miracle, Dt.13.1-5; Jos.10.11; 1 Kg.17.1-24; 2 Kg.4.1-8.6
 Miracles, apostolic, Gal.3.5
 Moabite stone, 1 Kg.16.21-28; 2 Kg.3.4-8; 10.32-36; p. 1525
 Money and coins, 2 Kg.22.3-7; Ezra 2.69; 3.7; Jer.32.6-15; p. 1531
 Money, Roman, Lk.12.59
 Music and musicians (Temple), 1 Chr.25.1-31; Neh.12.36; Intro. to Pss., p. 656
 Mystery, Dan.2.18; Rom.11.25-26; Eph.1.9
 Name of the Lord, p. xi, Gen.32.27; Ex.3.14; 20.7; 34.14; Lev.24.10-14
 Nations, origins of, Gen.10.1-32; 1 Chr.1.1-54
 Nazirite, Num.6.2; Jg.13.5; 16.17; 2 Kg.10.15; Acts 21.23-24
 Necromancy, 1 Sam.28.9; Is.8.19-20
 Needle's eye, Mk.10.25
 Nicolaitans, Rev.2.6
 Number of the beast, the; Rev.13.18
 Nunc Dimittis, the, Lk.2.29-32
 Oath (swearing), Gen.24.2; Ex.22.9; Num.5.19-28; Jos.9.20; 1 Sam.25.26; Job 31.1-34
 Oracle, Am.1.3,6,9; Nah.1.1
 Ordination of priests, Ex.29.1-46; Lev.8.1-36
 Palm Sunday, Mt.21.1-9
 Parables, purpose of Jesus', Mt.13.1-52
 Paradise, Lk.23.42-43
 Passover, Ex.12.1-28; 2 Chr.30.1-27; 35.1-6
 Patriarchs, pp. 1520-21
 Paul, conversion of, Acts 9.1-22
 Peace offerings, Lev.3.1-17
 Penitence, Pss. 6; 32; 38; 51
 Penny, Lk.12.59
 Pentateuch, pp. xxiii, xxiv
 Pentecost, Ex.23.16; Lev.23.15-21; J1.2.28-29; Zeph.3.9; Acts 2.1-47
 Perfection, Christian, Heb.2.10
 Personality, the human, 1 Th.5.23
 Peter, Mt.16.18
 Peter, confession of, Mt.16.13-23
 Pharisees, Mt.3.7
 Philistines, Gen.9.27; 10.2-5; Jg.13.1; 14.3; 1 Sam.4.1b-7.2; 2 Sam.5.17-25; 21.15-22; Jer.47.1-7; Am.1.6-8; Zech.9.7; p. 1519
 Phoenicia, Ezek.27.1-36; p. 1519
 Pillar, Gen.28.18; Ex.34.13; 1 Sam.2.8; 2 Sam.18.16-18; 1 Kg.7.15-22; Pr.8.27; 9.1-6; Ezek.6.1-14; pp. 1520-21
 Pillar of cloud and fire, Ex.13.21-22
 Plague, Ex.7.8-11.10; 1 Sam.6.4-5; 2 Sam.24.16-25; 2 Kg.19.35; J1.1 1-2.27
 Prayer, 1 Kg.3.1-28; 1 Chr.29.10-19; 2 Chr.6.1-42; Intro. to Neh., p. 586; Job 42.10; Pr.15.8; Dan.6.10
 Prayer, in Jesus' life, Lk.3.21
 Priestly Code, Ex.24.15-18; Intro. to Lev., p. 122; Lev.1.1
 Prophecy, Num.11.25; Dt.18.15-22; 1 Sam.10.6; 2 Kg.2.3; Is.48.3-5; Ezek.12.21-28; 33.1-9; Hos.1.1; Am.7.14; Mic.3.5-8
 Prophetesses, Ex.15.20; Ezek.13.17-23
 Prophets, Christian, Acts 11.27; Eph.2.20-22
 Prophets, False, Ezek.13.1-16; Jer.23.9-40; 17.12-22; Mic.3.5-8
 Proselytes, Is.14.1-2; 19.19-22; 56.3, 6-7; Ezek.14.1-11; 47.21-23; Acts 6.5
 Proverbs, 1 Kg.4.29-33; Pr.1.1
 Pseudonymous authorship, Intro. to 2 Pet., p. 1478
 Qohleth, Intro. to Ec., p. 805
 Qumran, pp. xxii, 1527-8; see also Dead Sea Scrolls
 Rahab (dragon), Ps.74.12-17; Is.30.7b; 51.9-11
 Rains, Dt.11.10-14; 1 Kg.17.1
 Rechabites, 2 Kg.10.15; Jer.35.1-19
 Redeemer, Lev.25.25; Job 19.25; Is.41.14-16; 43.14-15
 Redemption, Hos.3.1; Rom.3.24; see also Redeemer
 Remnant, 2 Kg.19.29-31; Is.4.2; 7.3; 10.20-23; 24.13-16a; Mic.5.7-9; Zech.13.7-9; pp. 1516, 1526
 Repentance, Num.23.19; Ezek.18.30-32; Lk.13.1-9
 Responsibility, collective, Gen.18.33-33; Dt.24.16; Jos.7.24-25; 2 Sam.12.13-14; Job 21.1-34; 31.16-23; Dan.6.24
 Responsibility, individual (personal), Dt.24.16; 2 Kg.14.6; Jer.31.29-30; Ezek.3.16-21; 14.12-23; 18.1-32; 33.1-20; 34.1-10; Hab.2.2-5
 Resurrection, Is.26.16-19; Ezek.37.14; Dan.12.2; Mt.22.23-33; 1 Cor.15.12-58
 Resurrection of Christ, Mt.28.1-10
 Retribution, Pss.10.4; 37; 73; Hab.1.1-2.5; see also Responsibility
 Righteousness of God, the, Is.5.16; Rom.1.17; Phil.3.9
 River, the sacred, Ezek.47.1-12; Rev.22.1
 Sabbath, Gen.2.1-3; Ex.16.22-36; 20.8-11; 2 Kg.4.23; Neh.13.15-22; Jer.17.19-27

Index to the Annotations

- Sabbath day's journey, Acts 1.12
 Sabbath laws, Mt.12.1-14
 Sabbatical year, Lev.25.1-55; Dt.15.1-11; 31.10-11
 Sacrifice, human, Jg.11.31; 1 Kg.16.34; 2 Kg.3.27; 16.1-4; Jer.7.31; 19.3-9; Ezek.36.14
 Sacrifice of Christ, Heb.9.11-10.18
 Sadducees, Mt.3.7; Acts 4.1-2
 Saints, Pss.16.3; 30.4; Rom.1.7
 Salt, Gen.19.26; Lev.2.13
 Salvation, Is.45.8; 62.6-9; Hab.3.18; Lk.18.26
 Samaria, p. 1525
 Samaritans, pp. xxiii, 1527; 2 Kg.17.24-28; Lk.9.51-56
 Sanctification, Rom.6.19
 Sanctuary, central, Dt.12.1-31; 16.1-8; Jos.22.12; 2 Kg.23.4-14
 Sanhedrin, Jn.11.47
 Satan, 1 Kg.22.19-23; 1 Chr.21.1; Job 1.6-8; Zech.3.1; 1 Tim.1.20; see also Devil
 Satrapy, Dan.6.1; p. 1526
 Saul, p. 1523
 Selah, Ps. 3.2
 Seleucids and Ptolemies, Dan.11.1-12.13; pp. 1527-28
 Septuagint, p. 1527
 Seraphim, Is.6.2
 Sermon on the Mount, the, Mt.5.1-7.27
 Servant songs, Is.42.1-4; 49.1-6; 50.4-11; 52.13-53.12
 Seven, the, Acts 6.1-7
 Seven churches, the, Rev.2.1-3.22
 Sex, Gen.2.24-25; 3.16; 9.25; 19.5; Lev.18.1-30; Dt.22.5, 22-27; 1 Cor.6.9-20
 Shekel, Ex.30.13; p. 1531
 Sheol, Gen.37.35; 1 Sam.2.6-7; 28.13; 2 Sam.12.23; Job 26.5-14; Pss.6.5; 16.10; 88.5-6; 139.8; Ezek.31.10-18; 32.17-32; Am.9.2
 Sign, Gen.9.13; Ex.3.11-12; Num.14.11; Dt.13.1-5; Is.7.10-17; Jer.10.2; Jn.2.11
 Siloam tunnel, 2 Kg.20.20-21; Is.22.8b-11; p. 1525
 Simony, Acts 8.18
 Sin, Gen.4.7; Pss. 32; 51; Rom.7.14-23; see also Apostasy
 Sin offering, Lev.4.1-5.13
 Sin, the unforgivable, Mt.12.31-32
 Slavery, Ex.21.1-11; Job 31.13-15; Introd. to Philem., p. 1451
 Sleep, symbol of death, Jn.11.11
 Sojourner, Ex.12.43-49; Lev.25.23; Dt.10.17-18; 2 Sam.1.14
 Solomon, p. 1524
 "Son of," the expression, Mt.5.45; 23.31
 Son of God, Jn.1.34
 Son of Man, Ps. 8.4; Ezek.1.28b-2.8a; Dan.7.13-14; Mk.2.10; Acts 7.56
 Soul, Gen.2.7; 1 Sam.25.26; Is.1.14; 1 Th.5.23
 Speaking in tongues, 1 Cor.14.1-40
 Spirit of the Lord, Gen.6.3; Num.11.16-17; Jg.3.10; 14.6; Ezek.2.2; Jl.2.28-32; Mic.3.8
 Spiritual gifts, 1 Cor.12.1-11
 Steadfast love, Gen.24.12; Is.63.7; Hos.4.1-3; 6.4-6; Mic.7.8-20
 Stephen, Acts 6.8-8.1a
 Stoning, Gen.38.24; Dt.13.10; 1 Kg.21.8-14; Ezek.23.36-49
 Suffering, vicarious, Is.53.4-6; pp. 1513-14
 Suicide, 1 Sam.31.5
 Synoptic Gospels, pp. 1167-8
 Tabernacle, Ex.26.1-37; 39.32-43; see also Tent of meeting
 Temple, 2 Sam.7.1-29; 1 Kg.5.1-18; 6.1-38; 7.13-50; 8.1-66; 2 Kg.22.1-20; 25.8-17; 1 Chr.22.2-19; 28.1-21; Ezra 3.1-13; Jer.26.1-24; Ezek.40.1-48.35; Hag.1.4, 15b-2.9; Zech.4.6-10a; p. 1524
 Ten Commandments, Ex.20.1-17; Dt.5.6-21; p. 1521
 Tent of meeting, Ex.33.7-11; Num.2.2; 1 Chr.9.17-34; see also Tabernacle
 Teraphim, Gen.31.19; Jg.17.5; Ezek.21.18-24; Hos.3.4
 Tetrarch, Mt.14.1
 Text of the New Testament, the, pp. xii, 1168-9
 Text of the Old Testament, the, pp. x-xi, xxii
 Thanksgiving, Pss. 30; 65; 75; 107; Rom.1.8-15
 Theophany (visible manifestation of God), Ex.3.1-6; 19.1-25; Job 38.1; Ps.18.7-19; Is.6.1-13; Ezek.1.4-28a
 Thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor.12.7-9
 Throne chariot, Ezek.1.4-28a
 Timothy, Acts 16.1-5
 Transfiguration, the, Mk.9.2-8
 Trinity, the, 2 Cor.13.14; Jude 20-21; see also Introd. to Eph., p. 1415, and Mt.28.19
 Urim and Thummim, Ex.28.15-30; 1 Sam.14.3; see also Divination
 Vows, Lev.27.1-34; Num.30.1-16; Ps. 7.17
 War, see Holy War
 Watcher, Dan.4.13,17,23
 Way, the, Acts 9.2
 Weights and measures, pp. 1530-31
 Widows, Gen.38.11; Ex.22.21-27; 1 Tim.5.3-16
 Wife, the good, Pr.31.10-31
 Wisdom, Job 28.1-28; Introd. to Pr., p. 769; see also Wisdom of Solomon
 "Wisdom of God," the, Lk.11.49
 Wisdom of Solomon, 1 Kg.3.1-28; 4.29-34; 10.1-5; 2 Chr.1.1-17; Introd. to Pr., p. 769
 Word, Gen.1.3-5; Jer.1.4,10; 5.12-17; 8.8-9; 23.29; Hos.1.1
 Wrath of God, Jer.6.9-15; Jn.3.36; Rom.2.5; Col.3.6; Rev.14.10
 Yahweh, Gen.4.26b; Ex.3.14; 6.2-3; 1 Kg.18.1-6; pp. xi-xii
 Zacchaeus, Lk.19.1-10
 Zion, inviolability of, 2 Kg.19.32-34
 Zion, mount, 2 Sam.5.6-9; 1 Kg.8.1-11; Ps.48.2
 Zion, songs of, Ps.46.4-7